

“Ohh, I can’t believe my baby sister’s going to Beacon with me! This is the best day ever!”

While there are certainly plenty of other people on the observation desk of the Airship, many holding their own conversations, there’s no denying that the incredibly bombastic blonde and the silver-eyed girl in the red riding hood are drawing the most attention. Which is just fine for one Jaune Arc, even as he leans against one of the few walls of the observation deck that isn’t also a window, trying to avoid drawing any sort of attention to himself.

Not that he was succeeding all that much. Blondie and Red might not be paying him any mind at the moment, but Jaune could feel the eyes of more than one other woman on the observation deck were on him. He tried to pretend he didn’t notice. Noticing and ducking his head or anything like that would just make them more interested than they already were. He certainly wasn’t about to look up and interact with any of the handful of girls who’d found their eyes drawn to his naturally good looks and silent attitude.

Given that he technically wasn’t even supposed to BE here, it seemed best to just lay low, or at least as low as someone like him could lay. His forged transcripts had been good enough to get him into Beacon, but if he made an utter fool of himself at any point, he could only imagine the scrutiny that would bring upon him. Especially since he was sure his family would eventually search for him. But truth be told, Jaune hoped they didn’t. Still, his hand slides down to brush at the weapon at his side, Crocea Mors in its sheathe, and Jaune can’t help but wince.

The theft alone might see them making a concerted effort to track him down, but Jaune knew he needed a weapon of some sorts, especially if he was going to actually do it, if he was going to actually become a Huntsman. He’d tried to diminish the loss by taking one of the older weapons, not wanting to steal the more advanced, more modern tools that his sisters and mother wielded.

Honestly, Jaune was banking on his father understanding, more than anything else. Hopefully, Nicholas Arc would see why he had to leave, why now was the time for him to go. It hurt to think about, but hopefully, his father would see the reason that Jaune had to stay away... especially after what happened.

-x-X-x-

*“I want to be a hunter! Like mom, like my sisters!”*

*His father had sighed and though he'd crossed his arms over his chest, his tone had taken on a consoling, understanding quality. His words had been meant to reach Jaune, to try and make him see why things were the way they were. Jaune just wasn't in the mood to listen.*

*"Jaune... you know why that can't happen. You and I... we're not cut out for that kind of life. I've taught you everything I know, I've taught you how to be an Arc, but the moment you come face to face with a Grimm, what are you going to do? None of our techniques work on such creatures. Face it son, we have our place, and they have theirs. It is not your duty to stand on the frontlines and sacrifice yourself for the Kingdoms. Not when you can do so much more by staying safe, staying alive, and finding a good woman to settle down with."*

*Jaune had scowled, practically sneering his father down.*

*"There are plenty of men who become hunters! And my aura is already awakened! I know my semblance. Just because our family techniques don't necessarily have much combat potential doesn't mean I can't still learn to do battle with Grimm at an Academy!"*

*Perhaps his obstinance was finally wearing on his father, given that they'd been having this argument for weeks going on months now, or perhaps Nicholas Arc had planned this beforehand. But rather than continue the very vocal disagreement flowing between the two of them, Jaune's father had let out a grunt, followed by a sigh.*

*"Very well. You want to prove you can handle it? I will test you, and if you fail my test, you will cease this foolishness."*

*Jaune's eyes had widened, and he'd nodded eagerly, not quite catching the trap. Not for a moment did he believe his father would give him an insurmountable challenge.*

*"What then? Lay this test before me, and I'll show you what I can do! I'll fight a Grimm, if that's what you want of me! Saphron has been teaching me some things, you know!"*

*The mention of his older sister did not at all please his father, and Jaune knew the moment the words left his lips that he'd made a mistake. Nicholas Arc's eyes had flashed, and his lips had thinned out, before ultimately, he'd shaken his head.*

*“No, not a Grimm. Come with me.”*

*Jaune had followed after his father, perhaps a bit trepidatious, but also brimming with energy and excitement. This was his chance, and he was not going to mess it up. Nicholas led him out into the family’s training yard, where only one of Jaune’s sisters was currently hard at work. But then, that made sense. The other six were all away on missions or at school, either learning to become huntresses or already BEING huntresses.*

*Saphron was the only one home at the moment, and Jaune couldn’t help but admire her form for a moment, smiling happily as he watched her work through several different moves, sweat glistening on his brow.*

*“Saphron!”*

*Their father’s sharp voice had cut through the air however, bringing an end to the fluidity of Saphron’s movement. The blonde had moved away from the training field to join the two of them, smiling easily all the while.*

*“Father, Jaune. What can I do for you?”*

*Nicholas was not necessarily a cold man, not usually. He was a good father, and always had been. But right now, despite having uncrossed his arms, he was most certainly frigid as he nodded his head towards the rack of practice weapons off to the side, his hands currently clasped behind his back.*

*“Grab a couple of swords, would you?”*

*Saphron had frowned, noting the strange attitude from their father, and her eyes had darted to Jaune for a moment... but in the end, she’d done what she was told. Nicholas had held out a hand when she returned, and she’d offered him both, unsure of what exactly he was after. Their father had only taken one though, and then immediately turned and offered it to Jaune. As the blond boy excitedly took it, Nicholas had finally dropped the bombshell and revealed his challenge to both Jaune and Saphron.*

*“You will spar with your older sister. Your goal is to land a single blow on her before your aura runs out. Saphron... you will come at Jaune with all you have. If you give anything less than your all, I will know, and you will have caused your brother to fail this test.”*

*Jaune’s eyes were wide, while Saphron had glanced worriedly between him and their father, clearly not quite understanding what was going on. But upon seeing the determination in Jaune’s gaze as his resolve had firmed up, he thought his older sister had gotten an idea of what was going on. With a simple nod, Saphron had led him out into the middle of the training field for their spar, while Nicholas had stayed on the sidelines, watching from afar.*

*Once they were out of earshot, Saphron had placed herself between Jaune and their father so that the older man could not read her lips. She’d made eye contact with Jaune then, even as she raised her weapon and he quickly did the same. The moment had decidedly not been like any of their prior sparring sessions, that much was for sure... and Saphron’s next words had only confirmed that.*

*“Do not hold back, Jaune. Use everything you have at your disposal to bring me down. After all, an enemy will not care for honor or chivalry. An enemy will not take mercy on you for restraining yourself from using your entire arsenal. This is not a spar, Jaune... this is a battle. Win!”*

*And then she’d launched herself forward, and Jaune had been in the fight for his life from the very beginning. Taking their father’s words to heart, his eldest sister had not held back even a little, clearly wanting to give Jaune the best chance to succeed... but at the same time, massively limiting his ability to do so. She was so much faster than him, so much stronger, so much more experienced... and to be fair, Jaune was still reeling from what she’d said.*

*The only thing that had made the challenge even remotely fair was the Male Arc blood flowing through Jaune’s veins. Not because of the techniques that his father had spent years teaching him, but because every Arc man had massive aura reserves. It had to do with needing stamina and endurance to outlast... well, to outlast any huntress they happened to come across.*

*But of course, if the huntress was strong enough, which Saphron certainly was, they could easily overwhelm someone like Jaune, which Saphron had begun to do, right from the beginning. The thing was, his sister had told him to use everything, she’d explicitly told him not to hold back. Jaune knew what that meant, but he still couldn’t believe she would... well, he didn’t want to fail.*

*At first, he’d tried not to resort to such things, but Saphron was just too fast, too strong, and too skilled. It had quickly become apparent that Jaune was not going to land a blow with the meager combat skills*

*that she'd managed to teach him in the past few weeks, and even more apparent that Nicholas had known this and set things up so that Jaune would get a hard lesson in his place in life.*

*But the blond boy had never been a very good student, and he'd always been a fairly slow learner. As things had gotten more and more desperate, Jaune had finally taken his sister's words to heart. Some of the Arc Family Techniques required physical contact... but not all of them. Not even the majority. On Saphron's next pass, Jaune had performed the simple act of making eye-contact with his sister. Blue eyes had met blue eyes, and Saphron's had barely had a single moment to begin to widen before Jaune had flexed that inner muscle in his ocular synapses that it was said only Arc Men had.*

*His blue eyes had twinkled as he used Eyes of Love on his elder sister, and Saphron had blushed profusely. It hadn't stopped her in her tracks or anything like that. It wasn't like her own eyes became filled with hearts, or she dropped to her knees and just knelt there slack jawed. If anything, it slowed her down by a half-second at best... but it was enough. It had been enough for Jaune to snag a blow, a simple strike with the practice sword across Saphron's stomach that they both had known did absolutely no real damage to her.*

*And then it was over, the two of them left panting. Except, Jaune had been the only one who took a significant enough loss to his aura to be panting. Before he'd used the Eyes of Love, Saphron hadn't even been breathing heavily. Still, he'd done it. He'd landed a blow on his sister, and at the time, in the moment, Jaune had thought he'd succeeded in his father's test.*

*"Did you think I would not notice?!"*

*And then Nicholas Arc had come stomping up, face contorted in a fury that Jaune had never seen from his father, not ever before. The man had looked apocalyptic as he loomed over Jaune, and Jaune had cringed back, eyes wide in shock and surprise. As his father reaches out and grabs him by the shoulders, Jaune is frozen in place, not sure how to react.*

*"Have I not told you, time and time again?! You do not use the family techniques on your sisters! You foolish boy!"*

*"Father, stop! I told him to!"*

*And then, just as suddenly as Nicholas had approached, Saphron had interposed herself between them, pushing their father away and cutting him off from Jaune. The fury had not been quelled, but it had*

*abated slightly as the older man looked to his eldest child, his firstborn. Jaune had been observant enough to notice that when Nicholas spoke to Saphron, it was still with rage in his voice... but a colder, quieter rage.*

*"You what?"*

*Saphron had swallowed hard but remained a barrier between their furious father and her little brother all the same. Jaune, in that moment, had found himself fixated on just how RED the back of his sister's neck had been, as she explained herself to Nicholas.*

*"I told him not to hold back. I told him to use every tool in his arsenal. He passed your test, did he not? You have no right to be angry with him now."*

*"... You foolish, foolish child."*

*Before Saphron could say anything else, hell, before Jaune could say or do anything, their father had followed that up with a sharp, dismissive hand gesture.*

*"Go... go to your rooms. NOW!"*

*Jaune had hurried away, only stopping to push the weapon he'd used in the fight away on the rack before heading to his room. He wasn't sure what Saphron had done behind him, whether she'd obeyed as well or stayed to argue some more with their father. Either way, Jaune had known he'd stepped in it big time... and if nothing else, the near-silence of dinner a couple of hours later had been telling enough.*

*Later that night though, was when the true gravity of things had finally hit him. He'd been laying in bed, still wide awake, when he heard footsteps outside of his door. Confused, wondering if perhaps his father had come to finally dole out punishment, Jaune had swung his feet off of the bed, but remained seated on it, staring at the door, watching the shadows of legs wash out the light from the hallway. But no one ever came in, because the next thing Jaune had heard was his father's voice, a low, hissed whisper.*

*"Saphron! What do you think you're doing?"*

*The shadows coming from under Jaune's door had frozen, and he'd realized belatedly that it wasn't his father, but his sister that had been standing outside his room. Now though, they were both there, having a quiet hissed conversation, clearly trying to refrain from waking him up.*

*"I was... I-I was just checking on Jaune, father. You were too hard on him earlier. He deserves your support, you know."*

*"Is that so? Is that all you were planning on doing? Giving him your... support?"*

*There'd been an accusatory note to Nicholas Arc's voice that Jaune hadn't understood at first. At least not until the conversation had continued.*

*"I-I don't know what you mean, father. O-Of course I want to give my little brother my support. W-What else could I be doing?"*

*A long pause had followed, and when their father next spoke, his tone had been surprisingly pitying.*

*"Saphron. You are my daughter, and I love you. Jaune is my son, and I love him. But... we spoke about this. He used the Eyes of Love on you. You need to keep your distance. The Arc Family Techniques are as powerful as they are for a reason. Since time in memorial, we Arc men have been destined, designed even, to spread our seed and build a portion of the next generation of huntresses. But not with our own kin. Not with our sisters or our daughters."*

*Jaune's eyes had been so very wide then, as he'd sat on the edge of his bed and finally understood everything from his father's anger to his father's pity... and his sister's presence at his door. The silence had been most telling of all. Saphron had not offered any sort of immediate denial to their father's insinuations... rather, instead she said nothing for a long time. Too long.*

*"... Come, my daughter. Come."*

*The next thing Jaune had heard from his eldest sister was the sound of sobbing as their father led her away. And that was when Jaune had known he had to leave. What he'd done to his sister, what he'd almost made her do... it was unforgiveable. He had to go. He had to put distance between him and her, he'd needed to get as far away as possible.*

*The fact that taking Crocea Mors and running away from home also sent Jaune on the path towards becoming that which he so heavily desired to be... that was neither here nor there.*

-x-X-x-

Or at least, that's what Jaune had thought at the time. He knew better now, the long days spent in travel as well as the hoops he'd had to jump through to get to where he was now forcing him to face himself in moments of quiet contemplation. Saphron had really just been the excuse for running away from home. He'd wanted to leave because, in that moment, sitting on his bed, listening to his sister cry, Jaune had known that his father would never give his blessing. Nicholas Arc would never endorse Jaune becoming a hunter.

Which meant it was time to go and seek his destiny elsewhere. And now here he was, standing in an Airship, listening to a buxom blonde with violet eyes thoroughly embarrass a shorter girl with red and black hair. At least, until the constantly running news broadcast was ultimately interrupted by something actually interesting.

"Hello and welcome to Beacon."

Jaune turned with everyone else to regard a rather beautiful woman with her hair done up in a bun, wearing a long-sleeved pleated top and a black, high-waist pencil skirt.

"My name is Glynda Goodwitch, and you all are among a privileged few that have received the honor of being selected to attend this prestigious academy. Our world is experiencing an incredibly time of peace, and as future huntsman and huntresses, it is your duty to ensure that peace continues. It will be my job, and the job of my fellow Professors, to provide you all with the training and the experience you will need to protect our world."

And with that, the projection fades from view. There's some more chatter and conversation amongst the others on the observation deck, but Jaune is too busy looking out over the spectacular vista that is Vale... and the Beacon Academy beyond, where the airship is currently headed. He can't help smiling as they make their way ever closer. The rest of his life is right in front of him.

-x-X-x-



As everyone steps off of the airship and begins making their way into the Academy, Jaune can't help but be a little slower, lagging behind as he takes in the sight before him. Beacon has always been just a name in his head, not an actual place. That is to say, he knew it was real and not some fairytale or anything like that, but he's never actually seen it, not even in a picture.

Honestly, he's a little glad for that. It's beautiful in person, and as far as first impressions go, it's making a rather amazing one. However, as Jaune finally gets his head out of the clouds long enough to try and figure out what direction everyone else is going in, he realizes that the same can't be said for the small girl in the red riding hood he'd seen aboard the airship.

It seems her taller, more buxom blonde friend has abandoned her and is currently walking away with a large group of people. Meanwhile, in the short amount of time since they've been separated, it looks like Red has managed to run afoul of a very important woman indeed. Living in a family of huntresses, Jaune of course knows who Weiss Schnee is, though much like Beacon he doesn't know her by sight, only by name and reputation.

Still, who else could she be? Dressed in all white, with the Schnee Crest he's seen doubling as Schnee Corp's logo a dozen times on his sisters' dust cannisters across her back, the white-haired girl looks and acts every bit the snooty heiress. And it seems that Red has very much gotten on her bad side, if the luggage all around them is any indication.

Should he do anything? Should he get involved? He could perhaps help defuse the situation, in some way. Or he could ignore it, as the grand majority of people, bombastic blonde included, seem to be doing. If he sprinted, he could still catch up to her and her group and perhaps ingratiate himself with them. He would need to make some friends, if he was going to survive here at Beacon with little more than his aura and his outdated, ancient sword.

On the other hand, there was this other girl too, dressed in all black, with a matching black bow in her hair. She was reading a book, and it reminded him somewhat of one of his more introverted sisters. Maybe he could talk to her instead?

Standing there on the docks of Beacon with decisions laid out before him that could very easily slip through his fingers if he remained indecisive for too long, Jaune wonders just what he should do. He feels like... like he's making a decision far more momentous than the situation really seems to call for.