**DR Fifty-Eight**

A new day brought new classes. While the others went to the shop to deal with another semester with the heinous heifer, I instead headed back to the same room I normally met my teacher in, the Wizard finally ready to teach me *magic.*

Which, it turned out, was *really fucking hard.*

To start with, while I did have Magic, with a capital M, I didn’t have a *lot* of it. I apparently possessed a fraction of that which Oz’s daughter had when she was *five*, though, given how I knew my talents worked, I very much doubted I was going to stay that way for long.

My Soul Talent let me learn any ‘magic’ power, which, while vaguely worded, clearly meant that it would instill in me the resources needed to use the powers I learned. Before our lesson, I wasn’t sure if I was actually developing magic of my own, or if the Talent was merely going to let me run them like some sort of emulator. Now, however, I had my answer, as I could actually *feel* my pool of magic, whereas if it was just ‘running the program’ I shouldn’t have that issue.

That said, it somewhat fit what little I knew of the Company. I got what I purchased, *exactly*, accomplished in the least impactful way possible. Pre-me Jaune never transformed, keeping things as close to Canon as I remembered to start. Portals back Home were rendered unnoticeable rather than making a doorway that could be attacked, and thus any energy expenditure keeping them secure was lessened. Mind Defense only kept me moving, allowing me to get up to the edge of panic before kicking in. Even my Home’s ability to restock and reconfigure worked slowly, gradually accruing some kind of shadow resource to make its changes, though one I could feel implicitly, and one I could add my Flame to in order to replenish faster.

Or I could be completely wrong, as I’d only just found *a* manual, and I was still flying blind.

However, I thought I might be on to something, though that last factor, that invisible resource, was something only I could sense. I’d talked to Pyrrha about it, and she couldn’t feel anything like that at all, though she had believed me that it existed. Lacking any other solution, I ended up chalking it up to being a dragon of *Creation*. My pocket dimension could create things, and could recycle some things to change itself around, but every time I asked for something new, or larger, or to replenish it after I’d used up Dust or ammunition, it pulled upon that invisible mass which I almost wanted to call a *Hoard*.

I honestly hadn’t given my specialization much thought, too focused on being a Huntsman, but, as time went on, I wondered if that’d been a mistake.

Back on topic, though, my lesson with the Wizard went. . . well it went. Several hours of straining, blindly reaching, and feeling like a complete idiot I’d *finally* managed my first spell.

It was a spark.

A *single* spark.

One that hung in the air, and I could control with my mind, clumsily. It wasn’t even hot, just a misshapen, twisting, golden point of light, that I struggled to keep from fading, even as I struggled not to gasp for breath, my reserves of magic quickly emptying.

“I. . . I have no idea if I’m good at this, or really, *really* suck. I made a fucking *spark,*” I stated, confused, and simultaneously annoyed and proud of myself.

Ozping, sitting on the other side from me, had put his scroll down and was watching me intently. As I looked his way, he lifted an eyebrow, asking, “Did you think Magic would be shooting blasts of magic, annihilating your foes?”

Before I could respond, he negligently waved his hand, sending a roiling ball of bright green light down towards the target still left over from Monday. Something about the tightly packed magic struck me as *wrong,* on a deep level, and the attack struck the steel outline of a person’s head and detonated, leaving an enormous dent in the metal.

“I mean, I am *now,”* I replied, getting a chuckle from the man, trying to figure out how the hell he *did* that. Something about it I *did not like,* but I had to admit it was effective. “Was that fire?”

“No, it was not,” the Wizard informed me. “Elemental magic is no longer something I can use. It has not been for many years. However, that does not mean I do not remember how to use them, when you are ready. But we are not here to talk about me. Your skill is impressive, Mr. Arc, as is your recovery time. To refill your reserve, small as it may be, in a mere hour, is quite odd.”

The man sighed, “Or maybe it is not. It would have been unusual in the time when all had the gift, more years ago than I care to think. But then, all I knew were human. Faunus, or those who could pass for Faunus, did not exist.”

“What was it like, back then?” I asked quickly, this fact news to me. I knew Oz was a reincarnating Wizard but that was *it*. I knew he had magic, but now how he’d had gotten it. If he’d originally had it. . . well, that explained it.

The ancient man smiled to himself. “Most used magic as I just did, throwing it in charged bolts of destruction that could even easily eliminate the forces of Grimm, despite, in many ways, being destruction incarnate. However, with that ease came. . . *indolence.* It was not until later that I learned the skill I am attempting to impart upon you now. In a way, if your reserves grow as I believe they will, it will make things easier.”

“Because if I learn how to work with a little, then I won’t substitute skill for power?” I guessed.

“Indeed,” he nodded. “In that vein, Glynda had noted you did something similar while she handled combat training. I assume your sessions with your partner have addressed that?”

*How did he. . . right, Wizard. Also, I keep reserving practice arenas on the school network,* I realized, feeling a bit foolish. “You assume correctly,” I agreed. “Still nowhere near *her* level, but I think I’ve been getting better.”

“You would have to be, or Mrs. Sepper would not have allowed you in her advanced class, regardless of your natural abilities,” Oz reassured me. Taking another sip of his tea, the man added, “But I think we heave drifted a bit from your original statement. To succeed at a beginning spell, even as tenuous as it was, with a mere few hours of being able to grasp your Mana, is nothing short of *miraculous*. Then again, given your circumstances, I suppose I should not be surprised,” he mused.

Having *no* idea what he was referring to, I just shrugged in a ‘what can you do’ way, getting a chuckle from the mysterious man.

“Regardless, I have a meeting I need to attend, and I’m sure your team is waiting for you at lunch. You won’t feel it now, but utilizing your innate abilities is tiring. Make sure to eat all you can,” he advised.

I felt fine, a little tired, but I nodded regardless. “Will do. Anything else?”

The Wizard pondered that question. “Instead of a field trip, today, the freshman will be undergoing a general physical assessment, including a medical check. You may skip it, if you wish, but I would prefer if you did not.”

“Sure, I’ll go,” I agreed, frowning as the thought occurred to me. “Why didn’t we have one when we first started?”

“Because this is more to check for symptoms of dangerous training, like direct Dust infusion and the like, than a general wellness check,” Oz answered easily. “To a lesser extent, you will soon start taking missions, curated and under professional supervision. There are always a few students each year who have. . . *alternatively acquired transcripts*,” he noted, giving me an amused smile, “and a semester is enough for those, that truly wish to be here, to get, as they say, ‘fighting fit’.”

I opened my mouth to ask another question, but the Wizard beat me to it. “If you are worried about those who received special dispensation to join, such as Mr. Ren, or Ms. Valkyrie, they received a checkup before their Initiation. Both were suffering from mild malnutrition, but the fortnight between their arrival and their becoming students of Beacon were more than enough to address those issues. Modern medicine *truly* is a marvel,” he remarked fondly.

“Now, we both have places to be,” he said, standing, and starting to walk for the door, cane clicking on the floor. “I will see you Monday Mr. Arc. And remember, do not train this on your own.”

“I won’t, Oz,” I shook my head, standing myself, and opening a portal Home to get to the cafeteria faster. “See you then.”

<DR>

The physicals were actually kind of fun. It wasn’t ‘turn your head and cough’, but something more akin to the Hero exams from One Punch Man, with various machines set up, and the medic students running it along with Professor Peach and Goodwitch running it. The foreign students could skip out on it, and many did, but quite a few stuck around anyways. Thankfully, everything was rated for Huntsman use, and we were in fact encouraged to use our Auras, as we’d be using them in the field.

The results we’d gotten were a little surprising, honestly. I didn’t pull any Saitama-level BS, breaking the test machinery, but I seemed to be in the top five percent of those assembled, at least, in terms of pure power.

I was beating out Yang by just a hair, something that I was sure if annoyed her, or made her happy, but was definitely motivating her.

Checking with a few of the medical students, while hitting that hard was impressive, I was actually only in the top third of *real* Huntsmen, and that was discounting those that had Strength-enhancing Semblances. While I had an absolute *lake* of Aura, I couldn’t properly utilize it, which gave me unreal endurance, but that didn’t translate into pure combat power, as shown by the fact that *Ren* was placing as high as Yang and I.

The boy couldn’t keep it up for anything like a Tide, or even a protracted siege, but in terms of burst power he was actually kind of ridiculous. When I asked him about why he didn’t fight like that, he had merely shrugged.

“You never know how long a battle will be,” he’d remarked, glancing towards Nora, who was cackling as she, with the staff’s permission, bit down on a grain of Lightning Dust. The girl’s form was wreathed with pink electricity, and she slammed a punch into the measuring drum with a resounding *CRASH*, more than doubling my own score. The power faded, and she swayed a little, before rallying and giving the shocked medical student a thumbs up. “Or who I’ll need to carry away.”

“. . . fair enough,” I agreed, shaking my head. “Is she going to be okay?”

“If she’s not, she’s in the right place,” he pointed out. “It’ll be good to know how often she can do this,” he added with a wave. “That’s number nine.”

“Smart,” I nodded, and we both headed over to the reinforced ‘Whack-a-Grimm’ machines. “But if you have the opportunity for a kill-shot?”

The Mistralian boy offered a sly smile. “I did punch a King Taijutsu’s head so hard it exploded.”

*“Nice,”* I smiled, holding up a fist, which the Ren obligingly bumped.

The rest of the tests went similarly, with Pyrrha doing well in anything that was based on reaction time, Ruby topping things that relied on pure speed, while Nora beat the pants off us in strength-based tests. The ginger girl did need to stop using Dust after the fourteenth test, but we were pretty much done by that point already.

After that was a medical check, Peach taking over for the student that was doing my physical. Part of that was a blood test, which I balked at, but went ahead with, trusting in my Defenses to stop any kind of voodoo shenanigans. I didn’t think *Oz* would do it, but the man didn’t have the best record with security. Or wouldn’t’ve, if things had gone as they had in canon.

Regardless, she took a vial of my blood, freezing when she saw the unmistakable blue tint in the fluid, which shimmered when she flicked the glass. “That’s normal,” I told her, as she grabbed some kind of scanner and ran it over me.

The woman gave me a skeptical look. “Is it your Semblance?” she asked quietly, normal good cheer suppressed, trying to keep something akin to patient-doctor .

I shook my head.

“Don’t say it’s because you’re a Faunus,” she warned. “You bleed just as red as the rest of us.”

“Obviously, *I* don’t,” I quipped, asking before she could respond, “Oz asked you to do my checkup, right?”

Peach stared at me for a long moment, before she shook her head, muttering under her breath, *“That man and his secrets.”* Standing tall, the vial in her hands seemed to disappear, but I barely caught her slide it into a hidden compartment in her mechashift clipboard. “In that case, I’ll do your bloodwork later. Now, your wings are biological, correct?” she asked with a slightly manic grin, which widened even further. “Good. Now *spread ‘em!”*

Rolling my eyes, I manifested my wings, opening them wide as the physician started to poke and prod me.

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In Port’s next class, I greeted Penny, noting with some humor that her sleepy teammate had brought her own small pillow, even as the blonde one shot the red-haired girl a disapproving glare.

It wasn’t until Sepper’s class that thing got *interesting*.

Walking inside, there were several of the visiting teams waiting, one of which smiled and waved to Pyrrha. The gladiatrix grabbed my hand and dragged me over to them.

There were four of them, all of whom were dressed in actual armor. The one who waved was a man in plate armor, a deep blue cloth shawl around his neck and shoulders, and a greatsword propped up next to him. “Nikos!” he greeted as we walked closer, our other teammates following after, “I was wondering where you got off to when you never came to Haven!”

“I went somewhere that not *everyone* would know my name, Artorias,” the woman replied.

The second of the knight’s team, a well-muscled, and scantily clad man in a gladiator’s garb snorted. “Fat chance of that, Niky.”

My lover rolled her eyes, smiling, “I’ll have you know that I found just that. This is Jaune Arc, my partner, who in fact did *not* know of me.”

I’d admitted to her that I *had* known who she was, but that I didn’t really care, and she’d admitted that she’d suspected as such, but had cared more about not being pedestalized than actually being an unknown. She’d asked me not to lie to her again, and I’d agreed, easily, pointing out that I hadn’t lied to her since we’d gotten *involved*.

The third member of the knight’s team, a woman in samurai style armor and yellow patterned silks shot me a disbelieving look. “You from the middle of nowhere?”

“Yep,” I nodded without hesitation. “Farm in the ass-end of nowhere. Should I know who you are, then?”

The woman frowned, insulted, as the last member, in a middle-eastern looking set of chainmail covered in blue-green cloth chuckled, only his eyes visible as he glanced towards the samurai. “You did ask, Otosa,” he remarked.

“You know these guys, Pyr?” Yang asked, glancing at the Mistralian team.

“I hope she would,” the gladiator replied with a grin, “Given how many times she’s kicked our asses.”

Pyrrha shook her head, smiling, “I’m sorry, where are my manners? Yang Xiao Long, Blake Belladonna, may I introduce you to some of my fellow tournament fighters. Artorias Stele, Spartacus Ammos, Otosa Huang, and Nasim Pirzma.”

“Enchanted to make your acquaintance,” the now named Nasim greeted, bowing his head in greeting, eyes intent on the brawler behind his veil.

Spartacus, the gladiator, leaned forward, giving me a speculative look. “So, what makes you think you’re good enough to be paired with The Invincible Girl?” he asked, an edge to his tone.

“*Ammos,*” my lover rebuked, but stopped as I held up a hand.

I smiled, my grin full of teeth. “Because to me, *she’s not*.”

The gladiator blinked, before he, Otosa, and Nasim all looked to Pyrrha, even as Artorias gave me a measure stare. “*Really?”* Spartacus questioned.

My partner smiled, “In our first bout. We’ve had many since then, and he’s only gotten better.”

“You still have me beat twenty hits to one,” I pointed out.

Yang, on my other side, nodded, “And Pyr did pin ya to the ceiling that first time.”

Artorias turned his eyes to Pyrrha, and she nodded. “Alright then,” he smiled, leaning forward and offering his hand to me, “Hope to see you in the tournament.”

I took it, and while his grip was firm, it wasn’t anything close to crushing. “Same.”

Before we could say anything else, Mrs. Sepper walked in, looking over the dozens of gathered students with unamused eyes. “Come down. Line up,” she commanded.

Waving a hand for the others to follow, my team assembled as we always did for the older woman’s class, before we spread out and started to work on our techniques. There were quite a few of us, and while I hadn’t seen Volume 3, where the Tournament took place, I’d seen clips. The black guy with the trumpet was one I recognized, if only for how ridiculous his weapon was, but the rollerblade chick was nowhere in sight.

Actually, looking around, the number of people here was very much *off*. Trumpet-man was here, but he seemed to be alone, as were a red haired guy in a blue vest, a purple haired girl wearing a light purple coat over a breastplate, the same dark-skinned blonde girl that’d given Pyrrha the stink-eye, and, yep, that was Mercury Black at the other end of the group. The assassin seemed mildly amused, actually, meeting my gaze and lifting an eyebrow.

I shot him one of my own, and he just shrugged, smiling.

The only other fully-formed team was a group that looked so incredibly non-descript they seemed like civilians that’d wandered in. A woman in casual clothing, another wearing a uniform of some sort, a man in a suit, and another in what I’d call ‘business casual’, they all seemed nonchalant, but were paying close attention to the rest of us.

Sepper waited for us to assemble, before she looked over us, gaze cold. “This is the advanced combat class. This is for those who have proven themselves competent. This is where student hone their Semblances and Auras into the weapons they are. What this is not is a place for spies.”

“Hey, isn’t that harsh?” Mr. Trumpet objected.

“Do you think your teammates weak, Flynt Coal?” the instructor questioned in return.

The Atlesian frowned, “Of course not!”

“Then why are they not here?” Mrs. Sepper pressed. “Or do they think themselves so powerful they have nothing to learn?”

“Nah, they’re just. . . busy,” the combat musician disagreed weakly.

The Huntress turned away from him to regard the room as a whole. “This is a class that specializes in Semblances. As such, each of you will disclose your Semblances to those gathered, in full.”

The nondescript girl, wearing a sweatshirt and jeans, scowled. “You can’t make us do that!”

Mercury waved a hand, “Um, teach? I don’t have a Semblance.”

*That* got the instructor’s attention. “Do you mean you are not aware of your Semblance?”

The assassin shook his head. “Nah. Had it stolen. Killed the fucker that did it, but I didn’t get it back.”

Sepper stared at him, before nodding sharply. “My condolences.” Turning the rest of us, she continued, “If you do not wish to disclose your Semblance, you may leave. If you are here without your team, your team has a month to come to this class. If they do not come, if you lie about not knowing your Semblance, or lie about its nature, I will dedicate time to teaching all who attend what your Semblance truly is, or that of your missing teammates, and how to counter it.”

“You can’t do that!” the casual girl objected. “That’s not fair!”

“And spying on your opponents is?” the old woman replied without looking at the other student. “If you do not like my terms, then you may leave. Now.”

Trumpet guy shrugged, walking for the door. “Can’t blame a guy for trying.”

“You will find that I can,” Mrs. Sepper noted coldly, turning to the others.

Mercury followed the atlesian. “I’d be fine, but my teammates would bitch. *So annoying.*”

The purple-haired girl followed, as did the non-descript team, the casually dressed girl, who I assumed was the team lead, promising, “We’ll be having words with the Headmaster about this treatment!”

The Huntress just stared, silently, as they left, slamming the door behind them. Only two groups were left, the tournament fighters, and the dark-skinned blonde, who promised, “I’ll drag my team in.”

The blue-clad knight took a step forward, looking around the room. “I’ll go first, then. My name is Artorias Stele, and my Semblance-”

“One moment,” Sepper cut him off, smoothly pulling out her sword in one hand, one of her high-caliber pistols with the other. With a swing of her blade, she sent a waist-high cloud of mist swirling out across the arena. It expanded, obscuring the floor in a uniform haze, except for a single spot where it formed an odd hole.

“Oh no, an unknown infiltrator,” the older woman remarked drooly, gun coming up in a flash and barking as she started shooting *something,* bullets deflected by something unseen, then striking as a female voice yelped in pain, the hole moving as the invisible girl bolted for the door. Sepper followed the interloper, shooting a dozen shots either at, or *into*, the student before they made it out the door, which was quickly shut, the one more shot ricocheting off it as it closed.

Our instructor waved her sword again, and the mist was blown away, dispersing, before she sheathed it, reloading her pistol before stowing it. “Violet Dupont of team Midnight,” she informed us. “Her Semblance, Fade, allows her true invisibility, which drains her Aura, but only when she moves above a certain threshold. To deal with her, area of effect abilities are best to isolate her location, at which point ranged or disabling attacks are best, unless you feel comfortable fighting an unseen foe. Making her move will drain her Aura just as surely as striking her. Any questions?”

“How’d you know she was there?” Ruby asked, wide eyed and impressed.

“She is not as quiet as she believes,” Sepper replied. “I made certain to know the Semblances of all the visiting students. Chameleons are usually very predictable.”

“If you know all our Semblances, why are you making us tell everyone,” the samurai girl questioned.

Sepper regarded the yellow-clad fighter. “To see if you are respectable enough for me to spend my time improving your capabilities. I have long ago learned to not train those I will likely need to hunt down and kill when they go rogue.”

“And you think you could kill us?” the girl demanded.

The Huntress blurred into motion, reaching back as she disappeared, even as Otosa went to her sword, but the girl had only gotten her hand around the katana’s hilt when she froze, feeling the barrel of the instructor’s gun against her neck. “Yes,” Sepper replied simply, the others quickly backing away from the pair.

Watching the two, I could see the moment the atlesian student decided to go for it, turning even as Sepper fired, draining the girl’s Aura with the point-blank shot. The Samurai twisted to face the teacher, and blasted forward as living lightning as a thunderclap went off, but Sepper had teleported away, returning back behind the girl as Otosa reformed severa; dozen feet away, blade out, and the instructor once more pressed the tip of her gun to the back of the girl’s neck. “Would you like to continue playing, or a formal lesson?”

The atmosphere in the room was tense, but the samurai just chuckled and nodded, slowly sheathing her blade. “Okay. Maybe you could show me a thing or two.”