Grimm Girls Book 2 Chapter 3:

Dear Professor

I hope this letter finds you well Peter. As you may have known my son Jaune has finished his preliminary studies and recently applied to Beacon in hopes of following my footsteps instead of listening to my wishes for him to find another dream. He is full of idealism and theories with little practical sense or talent. I’ve little doubt that the academy will not accept him but am also aware that you mentioned that your university in the city is looking for talented youth to help run the institution. I’ve already suggested this to Jaune and he should he apply to the position I kindly implore you to look after him in the same way you looked after and watched out for a similarly inexperienced and goofy blonde boy those many years ago.

- A letter from Nicholas Arc to Professor Port

 Cardin dared not move as the Grimm Girl slowly hopped its way towards him. He racked his cloudy memory for a name and recalled something called a “Horror Hare” he had laughed when Jaune mentioned the name of the creature but there was no humor in his situation now. The tall bunny girl’s black furred belly showed no signs of the huge meal it had had the night before and Cardin worried that this might mean he was saved just to be breakfast for the creature. Rolling onto his back he slowly began crawling backwards putting space between him the huge hare. Unfortunately his broken leg made the whole thing a painful and slow ordeal and soon the Grimm Girl was practically atop of him. Long rabbit feet stood on either side of his body and the beast brought its head with big brown eyes down to look him right in the face.

 Cardin could hardly breath, he was at the Horror Hare’s mercy, he could feel its warm breath on his skin and the deep brown eyes that peered down at him were so human like that it was more frightening then her monstrous parts. For countless minutes they remained still each looking at the other before a twitch of the Horror Hare’s ears broke the spell and Cardin reeled about and crawled as fast as he could. His leg screamed in pain as he tumbled out of the nest and rolled along the uneven stone floor but fear and adrenaline kept him going. Bones, leaves and twigs were sent flying in his mad rush for safety though he was stuck only going deeper into the cave but anywhere away from the Grimm Girl was preferable. He had almost made it to the far side of the cave when he felt something seize him by the collar of his shirt prompting him to scream in fear.

 The Horror Hare had bitten down on his shirt, like a mother cat with her kitten it pulled him by the “scruff” back towards the nest of grass and branches. With surprising gentleness it let go one he was back on the soft material. Again Cardin moved to crawl away, despite gasping with pain from his leg, and again the Horror Hare seized him and pulled him back to the nest. This time it did not leave him free to move but rather laid down atop him, thankfully avoiding his broken leg, and pinned him under its weight. Cardin tried to squirm out from under the Grimm Girl’s bigger body but its bulk was just too big for him to escape from while not being so heavy that he was crushed under it. His wriggles and struggles only elicited an annoyed sounding chattering of teeth and a soft growl from the Horror Hare as it shifted around as to be perched atop him like a bird in its nest. Cardin’s leg was on fire from the pain of him crawling about on it and he had no chance of escape. With terror he resigned himself to being trapped under the monster, at least its fur was soft but that was the only small consolation he received before fading into unconsciousness again.

(At the Arc residence in Vale)

 Jaune had woken up feeling shockingly at ease considering how little sleep he had actually gotten overnight. After a half hour of awkwardly trying to keep the cuddling obsessed Harpy at arms length the bird girl had thankfully gotten drowsy once again from her binge and had conked out on his couch once again. Making sure the avian Grimm Girl was truly fast asleep Jaune quickly scraped together what food he had left for a meager supper and then had made a hasty retreat back to his room and locked himself inside it again. Just because the Harpy had been friendly for a few moments didn't mean it would reconsider how she saw him once her belly was no longer full and happy.

 In fact Jaune had struggled with the confusion of what had just happened throughout most of the night. Why hadn’t the Harpy eaten him? Or at least attacked him? Every other Grimm Girl he had encountered was only focused on eating people as they broke out of the Grimm and Creature Park. What was different about this Harpy? Was she just and oddity or was this a more regular behavior for Grimm Girls? He certainly hadn’t heard otherwise and surely the books and education institutions would have reported cases of friendly Grimm if such things existed. Part of Jaune wanted to just simply accept that the Harpy was genuinely harmless but he had to be realistic. She was a monster, an overly cute one but a gluttonous Grimm Girl nonetheless and was best feared. He’d be careful around her until he came up with an idea of what to do about her. Carefully stepping down his stairs after quickly showering he saw that sadly, his problem hadn’t vanished overnight. The Harpy was already awake and rummaging through his cupboards, sending pots, pans and utensils flying in her search for food. Jaune was just grateful that she wasn't trying to eat him on sight, he could always clean up later but there was no recovering from being digested.

 “Cookie friend!” She chirped upon seeing Jaune and then leapt up into the air to give him a hug that nearly sent him falling to the ground. Her feathers brushed against his face and arms, an almost pleasant tickling sensation. He managed to untangle the Grimm girl’s arms from around him and put a cookie into her mouth to distract her. Thankfully he still had the last box of the snacks. As his odd roommate munched up her treat Jaune turned to enter the kitchen when a clock chimed and he jumped in fright as he noted the time. He had to leave for work! He began to start his usual scurrying for all the things he needed when he realized two key issues. One, he had no food to make his lunch with and two what was he to do with the Harpy? He could just rush out of the house but if she got loose in the city who knew what would happen to her, or anyone she encountered for that matter. Or worse, she may follow him to work and that would be a nightmare as well. He could just imagine trying to explain to people why a Harpy was following him like a big hungry pet canary.

 “Oh man what am I going to do? And that meeting with the Atlas specialist is today!” He ran his hands through his hair as if he provided enough pressure to his head that it would give him an idea.

 “Friend?” The Harpy asked as she hopped over to him to nuzzle his hand as if asking for more food. He absently returned her affection with a pat on the head. If there was just some way he could either convince or distract her so that she’d stay in the house while he was gone. If only there was…wait a minute!

 Strolling over into his living room, Harpy hopping along behind him, Jaune grabbed the TV remote and activated the television, switching the channel to a nature and wildlife one. He heard the Harpy’s squawks of surprise as the volume from the television kicked in, startling the Grimm Girl who fluttered back in the air to land on the top of his couch, wings spread wide and feathers puffed up in an aggressive posture. She quickly realized though, that the images and noises on the TV weren’t dangerous and Jaune couldn't help but chuckle as the Grimm Girl soon settled down atop the couch like a perched bird to watch the screen intently. Jaune remembered this tactic because he had used it own his younger sisters when he was stuck babysitting them back in the day. Just put on a show they liked and they wouldn't move for hours.

 “Guess someone likes the TV huh?” He asked the Harpy, trying to resist the urge to ruffle the bird girl’s hair. He had to keep reminding himself that the Harpy was a potentially dangerous monster. Yet already after so little time spent around this Harpy and his viewpoint on her was changing. That fact scared him as much as her very presence in his house did.

 “TV….” The Harpy said as she stared at some birds flying across the screen as if in a trance. Jaune hoped she’d stay that way at least long enough to stay out of trouble while he was gone. Putting some cookies on a nearby end table for her and pouring a glass of water Jaune quickly patted the Grimm Girl on the head and ran for the door.

 “I’ll be back later. Stay in the house okay... ... bye!” He stepped out the door and strolled down the walk, creeped out by how he could hear a faint “Bye friend!” from within his house. He felt like a parent leaving their kid at home alone for the first time. His pace quickened along the sidewalk, the faster her got to work the faster he could get home, if he had one to return to by the time the day was done.

(In the forests to the east of Vale)

 Cardin awoke to the sensation of the Horror Hare no longer keeping him in the nest. He slowly opened one eye and then the other, once again thanking whatever deities that ruled Remnant that he had woken up uneaten. Rolling over slowly he gently eased his way along the nest towards the exit of the cave. Every time he bumped his broken leg he couldn't help but hiss in pain, which he feared would bring his furry captor hoping back. Thankfully though, his pained grunts and grumbles went unheard and Cardin soon reached the edge of the nest and began crawling along the bare rock of the cave.

 “Going to slow”, he grunted while trying to sooth the broken bone that throbbed. “Got to get moving faster.” Who knew when the Grimm Girl would come back? Plus he had no idea how far away help was and he’d rather naught be wandering the woods with a busted leg after dark.

 Cardin may have never been one for memorizing facts very well or reciting his studies but he was clever in his own way, having gotten through school by being creative and focusing on what he did best. One of those things was improvising. Sure not all of his improvisations had worked, as Jaune was often too happy to remind him about, but Cardin as a Winchester and that meant that he wasn't one to quit or give up easily. Using what he had around him and within easy crawling distance he began shaping a crude splint. Using sticks and some long and large grasses from the Horror Hare’s nest he wrapped and bound his leg as best as he could. He tested the strength of his work and, satisfied that it could at least hold for now, set about finding a crutch of some sort.

 A few moments later, hobbling and still in pain, Cardin emerged from the mouth of the cave. Spare strands of grass were twisted about each other as makeshift rope in case his splint broke and his right hand held a large bone that he used as a cane. It wasn't his first choice when it came to material but nothing else in the Horror Hare’s lair was strong enough to support the weight of his busted right leg. Thus he had found this long, slightly curved bone of some beast he didn't wish to know of or how the Horror Hare got it and used it for support. The first few steps were clumsy, awkward and painful but soon enough he managed a stumbling gait that only occasionally sent a searing shot of pain up his spine from his leg. Locomotion solved Cardin just needed to get to safety, he knew he shouldn’t be moving around with a busted leg but he didn't dare stay out in the woods for the week’s it’d take for it to recover. Hobbling his way to a village or more preferably Vale itself and then getting medical help was the better decision.

 It was not easy going. These weren’t the type of woods like the ones he roamed as a kid. Those had been to the North of Vale where trees were sparser and were made up of coniferous trees. The deciduous woods where he was were thick and full of creeping ferns and vines, roots reaching out from and along the ground like fingers grasping at his feet making each step a risk that he’d trip and cry out in pain. Any sound he made echoed in his ears like roaring thunder for each noise could have brought Grimm or worse the Grimm Girl. He shuddered and pushed a branch out of his way, no use worrying on what he couldn’t control. Putting his back to the rising son Cardin knew that if he traveled far enough west he’d hit the sea, no matter where the Grimm Girl brought him he couldn't be too far from Vale and the shoreline was his best bet.

 The day went on, the rising sun boiling his back and making sweat coat his clothes. His leg ached, the other was sore, and he was hungry and thirsty. No stream or pond to drink from to be found. The splint on his leg threatened to fall apart and Cardin knew the amount of ground he had covered since leaving the cave was pathetic. He could travel faster when he was a kid. Pausing under the shade of a large oak tree he wiped sweat off of his brow. He wondered if he should maybe make some sort of camp and signal for help. His scroll was cracked and broken from his fall the other night at the Park but he could try to start a signal fire of some sorts.

 Cardin was about to start scrounging for materials when he felt an odd sensation, a small tremor. He leaned heavily on his bone-cane in order to stay upright. The tremor occurred again, and again. Rhythmic and increasing in intensity, he recognized these small quakes. They had shaken him before on the night that the Grimm and Creature Park, and his life, had gone to hell.

 The giant Grimm Girl’s steps got closer and closer to the point where they sent Cardin tumbling to the ground with a cry of pain from his leg. He rolled in close to the oak tree as giant thunderous crashing accompanied the tremors. Anything else in the woods had to wind its way through and under the trees, whereas the Ogre walked over them by the sounds of it. Trembling like the leaves in the tree above him Cardin felt any bravery, resolve, and strength in his body leave him. He clung to the shelter of the tree, praying that the stomping would go away. Why the heck was the Ogre here? How?

 Thankfully his prayers were answered in this case as the earthshaking steps began to fade as the Ogre’s path took her away from his position. Cardin took his hands away from his head where they had been held in some sort of position as if to screen himself from the giant unseen danger. Not knowing what came over him Cardin began to laugh, a jolly loud laugh that came from the sheer situation he was in, how exhausted and tired of it all he was. Part of him wondered if this was the first step towards insanity. On the other hand it felt awesome and relieving. Finishing his laughter he smiled, no sound of the Ogre returning and it had been over half a day since he had escaped the Horror Hare’s cave. Things were finally looking up.

 It was at that exact moment that the bushes rustled and the bunny Grimm Girl hopped out and gave him a look that reminded him of the times when his mom caught him sneaking out of his room at night.

 “Well fu…

 By the time Jaune made it to the professor’s office he was exhausted, stressed out and worried. Not too different from most workdays except he was usually more punctual. Professor Port didn't seem to notice; the older man was busy leafing through some research papers while a small stack of books and other documents was propped up on the edge of his desk. His mustache twitched like a big busy caterpillar as his eyes poured over the papers with speed and accuracy. To outsiders the professor seemed a boisterous buffoon, harmless and hilarious. To Jaune…. well he seemed the same to Jaune as well but the young man knew his superior was a deeper person than his looks perceived. In some ways Jaune considered him a role model, a huntsman, scholar and professor all in one life. It was an impressive track record.

 “Sorry I’m late professor”, Jaune blurted out as he hung up his jacket and set his bag down in the corner of the large study. He immediately set about clearing up some things and readying the inevitable cup of coffee Port would soon ask for.

 “Not at all my boy. Why back in my day I was tardy quite often myself. This one time my friends and I showed up two hours late for a lecture back in my days at Beacon. How about we get some coffee my boy?”

 Jaune saw the professor smirk at how he had anticipated such a request. Taking a sip from his own mug Jaune asked the question he knew Port was waiting for.

 “Why were you so late sir?”

 “Overslept Jaune, out too late the night before with my usual posse. Well worth it though, we pulled off the best prank Beacon’s halls had ever seen to this day. It all started with some annoying transfer students from Atlas and the urge for revenge. See we snuck out late at night and headed towards the closest farmland we could find…”

 Jaune zoned out the Professor’s rambling as he examined the time. Only a few more minutes until the Atlas specialists were due to show up. Jaune wondered what they’d be like. The professor had insisted on him being present for the meeting the reason why Jaune didn't know. Something about learning about working with foreigners or such nonsense he bet. Jaune figured he’d encountered enough people from the Northen Kingdom to know what Atlas was like. They’d likely be stuck talking to some stuffed up, arrogant, militant prick with more snow in his hair than on the ground of his homeland.

 A polite rap came from the other side of the door.

 “Come in.” The professor called out and Jaune immediately choked on his own opinions as he saw the Atlas specialist and her escort. He didn't know who was who but both seemed close to his age for their high standings. The first girl looked as if she belonged in a commercial for a candy store or theme park. Her smile seemed to gather all the light in the room just to flash it back at them. Her freckled face was scrunched up by the large grin. Green eyes sparkled as they roamed over him, making Jaune feel like a bug under a microscope. Her orange hair was at his eye level given their height difference and before he knew it Jaune found himself returning the cheesy salute she gave both him and the professor upon entering the room. Her compatriot though, was the opposite of her in every way. Her smile was small and practiced; her dark olive skin contrasted the orange haired girl’s pale pallor. Even her outfit seemed more militant than the overalls and blouse of the green eyed cute one. The darker skinned girl wore a blue beret, white buttoned up top and blue skirt. All colored and styled in traditional Atlas military fashion with brass buttons polished to a shine. Even her handshake was stiff and proper.

 They soon introduced themselves. The girl who looked like she radiated sunshine and flowers was Penny Polendina the Grimm Specialist. Her stiff put polite companion was Ciel Solari, personal aide to General Ironwood, currently assigned as Penny’s own helper and guard. If the Professor had been as shocked as Jaune was at what the specialists looked like he hid it well. He beckoned the girls to their seats and then folded his hands across his desk, Jaune standing at his side.

 “Welcome ladies to our humble abode. Now I assume are you are here for this” Port gestured to the stack of Grimm Girl related documents and books. It was a small pile, hardly significant. And he must have noted the disappointed look on the Ciel’s face. “You’ll hardly find anymore information at any other institution Miss Solari, even an Atlas one.”

 Jaune smirked at the jibe though Ciel didn't appreciate the humor. Thankfully Penny went on to explain in a friendlier manner. Her voice as chipper and bright as her mannerisms

 “Most information on Grimm Girls in the past was based off of myths and legends more than facts, several of which have been debugged and the rest unlikely. Modern studies are few in number and are incredibly risky as there are few Grimm Girls in captivity to study and those observed in the wild often give no concrete results and even more frequently they end with the observer being eaten.”

 “Precisely”, Port chimed in, “Thus when I received the request from you for our documents I wondered why since as a specialist you’re likely to have read all the material before.”

 “Mostly yes, but details and witness accounts vary locally just as Grimm Girls do.”

 “Jaune my boy we’re witnessing a rare sight, someone from Atlas who can admit they don’t know everyone. You’re welcome to the university’s materials Miss Polendina, do not worry about returning them, they’re all photocopies of the originals and should you have need for anything else my assistant Jaune here can help you since I’ll be busy with work and lectures over the next little while.”

 Penny clutched the stack of papers to her chest. “Sensational! Thank you so much Professor and I’ll be sure to ask if I need anything.” She flashed her smile at Jaune though he was more concerned with the glare Ciel gave him. Gathering his nerve Jaune finally spoke up.

 “Excuse me Miss Polendina?”

 “Penny Please, I do hate being so formal Mr. Arc”

 “Ok…Penny then, is it alright if I ask what strategy the Atlas military is using to track the Grimm Girls and what you plan to do with them should you find any?” He regretted asking the moment he saw everyone’s reactions. Maybe it wasn't the wisest thing to ask military specialists about their plans. Once again Penny broke the stereotype though.

 “We’ve actually turned our focus to the areas surrounding the city. The Grimm Girls are unlikely to remain in such a densely populated area….hic. “

 “Odd, wouldn't they prefer an area with lots of prey, I mean, no disrespect Penny but I was at the Park when they broke loose and lots of them stopped for several bites to eat rather than flee to the country.”

 “That may have been the case…hic…Mr. Arc, but trust me…hic I’ve been doing this job for …hiccup… sometime hic…. sorry.”

 As Penny pounded her chest to try and clear the hiccups Jaune forgot his questioning and quickly poured her a glass of water. Passing it to her she grabbed his hand slightly and he was shocked by the strength of her grip. It was just for a moment but Jaune felt that if she wished to, Penny could have tossed him across the room with one arm. But then she was back to the sweet kind specialist. She seemed to have recovered after drinking the water down and thanked him kindly.

 “As for what I was saying, we’re taking the necessary precautions. Forces will stay in the city but we’re simply broadening the search radius so hopefully this crisis will soon be averted. “ She was still holding his hand. Touch soft and comforting now before her fingers gracefully sliding off of his and she seemed to almost sniff or inhale deeply as she backed away. If Jaune hadn’t been looking right at her he’d never have noticed, very strange.

 “As for what we’ll do when we catch them isn’t that obvious?” Ciel snarked. “We’re not some silly Valean civilian, we won’t keep them alive in a park. They’re monsters, they’ll be killed like all other Grimm. They may look different but I’m sure they die just the same.”

 Penny coughed, likely leftover from the hiccups. “Anyhow thank you all again but the General has me writing up some consulting papers for his field officers so if you’ll excuse us Professor and Mr. Arc.” The girls nodded their heads and left with the clicking of Penny’s boots and Ciel’s military shoes.

 “An odd pair”, Jaune commented. He set about putting the chair back. “Also a really quick meeting for all the ceremony involved. Couldn't an email or two accomplish the same Professor?”

 Port chuckled. “You never disappointment my boy. You’ve clever eyes and mind when you use them. This could have been simpler but part of me wanted to see just whom I was giving the materials over to. Plus it’s always good to be formal and ceremonial when working with other nationalities.”

 “Yes because your jibes at Atlas were so full of political tact and respect for their kingdom.”

 Port’s laughter echoed off the walls. “Hoho you noticed did you? When I saw that Ciel girl walk in and scowl as if this place was an illiterate pigsty and we nothing but annoyances I just had to see if I could get a reaction out of her.”

 Jaune frowned. How did this man ever come to such an important teaching position? Or survive as a huntsman for that matter. He chuckled as then another thought entered his mind. “Did you happen to make this meeting just to take time out of their day and annoy them.”

 “Maybe….” Port laughed.

 “Ugh I think I need a raise.”

 Meanwhile at Jaune’s house the Harpy was still engrossed in the television. She had eaten the snacks he had left out for her and was currently squawking happily at the images on the screen until she heard a knock at the door. With a curious “rawrk?” she hopped up onto her talons and took the short flight from the top of the couch to the front door. The knocking noise came again as she studied the door handle with her big silver eyes. She had seen Cookie open this but was trying to recall exactly how to do so. Lifting up one of her taloned feet she used it to begin fumbling with the latch.

 The mailwoman had witnessed many interesting sights in her job. From half dressed people answering the door, to vicious dogs, even one time someone answering but forgetting to put pants on first. None of these could match the shock she received when a Grimm Girl answered the door though. Whether through luck or skill the Harpy had figured out how to the open the door which swung outwards to reveal the mail lady standing their with Jaune’s mail falling out of her hands as she saw the Harpy who seemed just as shocked. Here she was, just out of snacks and now a cute human girl stood right before her! With a happy chirp of delight she tackled the mailwoman sending letters and parcels flying up in the air like confetti to celebrate her meal. The two of them fell to the ground with the Harpy hungrily leaning down to engulf the woman’s head just before she could scream for help. The hungry Harpy’s cheeks bulged as the woman inside screamed in the warm moist cavern, which began to gulp and suck her down. Since it was just after midday few people were at their houses and none witnessed the mailwoman’s demise. The Harpy was a small Grimm Girl but she still had the ferocity and strength to easily subdue her prey, taking loud greedy gulps as the woman’s shoulders were gobbled up, the monster’s throat already bulging with her head.

 “Gulp. Ulp. Gobble Glp!” The Harpy loved this. She loved how humans tasted, maybe she could try tasting Cookie later, and he looked yummy. Still she had to finish this meal first. Reaching out with her clawed finger on each wing she grabbed ahold of the squirming woman and began pulling more of her into her gullet. She gobbled and slurped, relishing the meal and the way her throat expanded as the mailwoman was pulled down it, closer and closer to her eagerly awaiting stomach. Already working her mouth over the human’s chest the Harpy slowly began dragging her meal back into the house with her. Had anyone looked at Jaune’s house they would have seen the shapely legs disappearing into the building even as they soon joined the rest of her in disappearing down the Harpy’s digestive tract. One of the Grimm Girl’s talons lazily reached out to swing the door to the house closed so she could enjoy the rest of her meal in private.

 The Harpy’s chest had swollen outwards as her meal traveled down into her belly, which had begun to grow. The pale exposed orb swelled and grew to contain the mailwoman, getting bigger and bigger till it hung over the Harpy’s lap and feather skirt. As she smacked her lips her gut began to wobble and quake with her prey’s struggles. Up, down, back and forth the woman moved, kicking punching and wailing, all of it muffled and futile. If anything the Harpy got more enjoyment out of prey that fought back. It sent tingling and pleasant sensations through her belly and up her spine. She cradled her big bulging belly lovingly as she sat upon the floor, legs spread wide by the stuffed gut and making small cooing noise as she leaned down to nuzzle it.

 “Gurgle, glorp. Burble. Slosh glug.” Her stomach began to moan and churn, delighted at being so full and having a big meal to work on. Inside the warm, sloshing and stomach juice filled chamber the mailwoman sobbed and struggled, already losing hope and strength. If the Harpy noted this, she didn't care or at least did not show it. She had a big full belly that she could feel gas building up inside and she was happy.

 “Buuuooorrrrraarrrrrp!” The bird girl’s belch echoed throughout Jaune’s house as she tried to waddle her way back to the couch to watch more TV, belly bouncing and sloshing heavily. She couldn't wait till Cookie got back; maybe she could even get him to rub her belly!

(Later that day, Elsewhere in Vale)

 Jaune’s felt as if his head had been replaced with a termite mound, the situation with Reese, the loss of his friends, The Atlas military presence and unseen dangers in the city, and not to mention the Harpy living at his house, it was too much to deal with. He’d worry about one problem only for another to take its place. If he tried focusing on how to solve on he’d realize that another prevented him from doing so. Priorities and needs clashed with wants and desires. In short, he had too much to deal with and not enough time.

 The Grimm Girl had to take priority, he knew that much. With her living in his house and likely needing lots of food, not to mention the fact that she was a monster made the Harpy the main issue he faced. Yet, when faced with Atlas officials, hell even a Grimm Girl specialist, he had said nothing. Surely Ciel and Penny could have contacted the Atlas military just as he could have contacted the police but he didn't. He couldn't put his finger on what, but something inside him didn't like it the way CIel had mentioned the Grimm Girls being killed on sight. He tried to picture the Harpy, her cute little face going rigid, her eyes becoming unmoving with death; it was an image that made his gut turn sour and his thoughts sad. He couldn’t do it.

 But what then, let the man-eating Harpy live in his house? Charge her rent? She wasn't exactly a normal roommate or pet. Maybe he could convince her to leave the city but the Harpy had tracked him down from the Grimm and Creature Park, who was to say she wouldn’t just come back? And that was where another worry gnawed at his brain. Penny had claimed that the Grimm Girls would have moved on from the city quickly, fleeing into the nearby countryside and yet the Harpy obviously hadn’t. Who was to say other Grimm Girls hadn’t followed suit? He recalled the massive Kraken or the frightfully obsessed Centaur that had nearly eaten him whole if not for his bird-friend’s intervention. He had a hard time imagining many of the Grimm Girls he saw that night fleeing like wild animals into the wilderness. Surely a Grimm Girl expert knew better than he? But then again Penny herself had said there was little information known about these beasts. Maybe he was already on par with an expert at least in terms of experience.

 Head clouded with worries and brain muddled with theories Jaune barely paid attention to his surroundings as he continued his walk home. He had kept busy at work after the meeting and had managed to convince the professor to let him take some books relating to Grimm Girls home with him. Maybe if he read up on the subject some more he could find some answer as to why the Harpy wasn't trying to eat him and what he could do with her. So caught up in his thoughts was he, that Jaune paid now mind to a loud belch he heard from an alleyway he passed.

 Within the, narrow, shadow filled alley there was a low rattle as golden scales slid lazily across the pavement. Another burp, this one partially stifled by pale skinned hands shot out and beneath the sound of the belch one may have noted a muffled scream. Coil after coil of golden scales shifted and moved, human shaped bulges or lumps trapped within though these lumps paled in comparison to the large, dumpster sized belly that quaked and shook with each movement of the people inside it.

 The Lamia had made a mistake the night the Park fell. She had been greedy, too greedy. Gorging on groups of humans to the point where she couldn’t move any faster than a worm and was as big and round as a stuffed caterpillar. Her sinuous body normally allowed her to rapidly slither along at a quick pace but with a belly full of prey and her snake half stuffed as well with already digesting bodies she was more like a slug than snake. When the Atlas war machines had attacked and driven off the Grimm she had still been in the Park and it was only through a combination of stealth and the fact that she ate anyone who saw her, that she hadn’t been discovered yet. The alleyways of Vale had provided some cover in the night but during the day pesky humans kept poking out from buildings and workplaces. If they didn't see her it was all well and good but if they did, she’d have another meal to weigh her down.

 With a sigh the Lamia gave her gurgling belly a gentle pat. She could only imagine how chubby this meal could potentially make her. The human city was a great place to eat but she wanted somewhere she could rest in peace to digest. Her keen senses had allowed her to stay a step ahead of the cumbersome clanking soldiers in white that patrolled the city but for how long? She didn't fancy being bloated on food and getting shot. That was when she caught the scent of the blonde boy who had just walked past the alley entranceway.

 Coiling up upon herself, squeezing those inside her gut even more, the Lamia’s forked tongue flicked out again and again. Tasting the air to assure herself she hadn’t imagined it. The boy had the scent of a Grimm Girl on him. Normally the Lamia wasn't one for spending time close to other Grimm Girls but there was some comfort in knowing other members of her kind were still in the city. Lilac colored eyes closed as she considered her options. On one hand she could stick to her current plan, eat all witnesses and slowly move during the night when she could eventually leaving the city or, she could track down this other Grimm Girl and potentially ally with her. Maybe she had found a safe place. There was little risk of losing the scent; her snake hunting abilities would allow her to track the dorky looking blonde boy easily. As her huge belly wobbled and glorped about, each noise giving her a lovely feeling yet also risking making her found the Lamia made her decision and licked her lips.

 While Jaune was returning home to find a big-bellied Harpy and the remains of the mailwoman he swore no one had a worse life than him. However, had he known what Cardin was stuck with Jaune may have reconsidered his words. His tall friend was currently being carried along in the arms of the Horror Hare. Cardin didn't dare struggle for he didn't want to fall to the ground at the speeds that the Horror Hare was hopping along. The rabbit girl was a blur of fur and limbs as it jumped along the woods. Cardin couldn't help but admire the ease at which the Grimm Girl moved amongst the trees and shrubbery. Its leaps and bounds cleared roots and bushes in no time, making the world a speeding green blur for the boy it was carrying in its arms as easily as if he weighed as much as a feather. Cardin tried to remain calm during the journey. The Horror Hare had manhandled him easily and Cardin managed to recognize some of the scenery there were moving past, it was taking him back to the cave. At least traveling like this was easier on his leg.

 He had gotten so used to the rhythmic bouncing and the way he bumped against the beast’s body that Cardin was startled when they came to a halt. Slight heaving of the Horror hare’s chest was the only evidence of any effort on its part. He decided it was best not to look at the armor chest too long, even if it was a monster Cardin was still a decent person. Turning his head about he saw they had paused in a small clearing where a stand of elm trees formed a thickly bound ceiling of green. The giant Grimm Hare twitched its ears and nose before stamping one foot on the ground several times. There was silence. It stamped again, the dull thud echoing in the relatively quiet woods. Just as it raised its large rabbit foot to stomp once more its ears perked up and Cardin soon heard it as well. The sound of light hoof beats on the ground and something crashing through the woods.

 Their was a large rustle in a berry bush and out leapt a delicate looking deer Grimm Girl Cardin would eventually learn was a Dryad.

 Lean and tall, with black fur covering its deer half the Dryad’s moonlight pale skin on its human half provided an alluring contrast. From the waist up the Dryad had the lean graceful body of a beautiful girl. Its orange hair fell down like smooth flowing silk. Blue eyes, glittering like sapphires narrowed at the sight of Cardin. Long arms moved to cross themselves across a modest chest that was covered with black cloth that left its shoulders and belly bare. A white hoofed foot clipped the grass the Dryad stood on. Her long narrow deer legs looked as if a strong breeze would blow them over. Short black fur covered its lower deer body except for a few white furred spots on its back and sides. A short white deer-tail twitched in irritation as it clip-clopped its way towards them. Cardin could now see two small bone bracelets on either arm as well as the small deer antlers poking out from her orange-gold hair. In short the Dryad struck Cardin as a graceful delicate, yet hard and serious creature.

 “What’s that doing here?” The Dryad asked Cardin’s captor without paying him any mind. “It’s bad enough you and your friends brought an entire army into the wilds now you’re picking up even more humans?” The deer girl practically spat the word “human” as if it left a foul taste in its mouth.

 Cardin was flabbergasted. The thing could talk? And what’s more he understood it? The poor boy didn't know what to make of this, Grimm don’t speak! As if the Dryad’s presence and harsh voice wasn't enough his Horror Hare captor spoke up in a much softer and sweeter tone. The words she said scared him senseless.

 “Can I keep him?”

“The Dryad

In the southernwoods of Remnant the Flaagra is a woodsman’s worst nightmare but Dryads in the more northern regions of our world replace these botanic beasts. Quick, agile, and cunning these deer-like Grimm Girls are hard to spot moving amongst the forests they call home, often emerging from the green expanses to raid upon human settlers and travelers. A lone Dryad isn’t the most dangerous Grimm Girl but they rarely fight or attack on even terms. Mythology of ancient humans linked them to spirits of the woods and they do indeed seem to become agitated by forestry or invasion of their woodland homes. If a man in Vale goes out to harvest some trees and does not return home its more than likely that he’s now digesting inside a Dryad.

Fast moving and also fast turning I do not recommend trying hunting a Dryad should one need to be caught or fought. Rather watchful eyes and good defense are any settlements best hopes against these creatures though there are tails of large herds of Dryads overwhelming entire towns.

Note: Dryad antler size and fur pattern varies amongst individuals from what I can tell. No two seem alike. They are also considered a very common Grimm Girl and their smaller size and antlers that can be turned into prizes make them attractive targets for ambitious huntsman and huntresses. Many of these individuals end up as Dryad fodder.