“Do you really think she’s still ahead of us with her team?” came a voice in Marshal’s ear, uncomfortably close, while he was sitting on the damp ground, back slouched against a tree. His brown eyes tiredly flickered back open as he blinked at the girl squatting right beside him and staring at him with wide sea green eyes; lazily, he rose a hand and tried to swat the face away as gently as he could lazily swat someone away.

“I’m sure that Vi’s still ahead of us. With her team, though… that’s another question, isn’t it,” he softly mumbled back as he brought his hand back through the mop of hair atop his head, staring the girl down. “Do you *ever* calm down, Indica?”

“Oh, that sure is rich coming from you,” she chirped back as she popped back upright from her crouch, rolling her eyes as she did so. Whatever mild annoyance Indica might’ve had, however, wasn’t enough for her to not offer Marshal a hand to pull himself upright with.

Taking her hand with a small groan, Marshal hoisted himself back upright, only muttering a soft “thanks” as he dusted off his back, adjusted his duster, and started to look around. After a brief pause to stretch and yawn, bear ears atop his head still twitching, he turned back to his teammate and asked, “Wait. Where’s Sierra and Tully?”

“I had them go off ahead. I figured you wouldn’t want to wake up to Tully smoking in your face, or Sierra blanking out on us all, *pardner*,” Indica explained, an awfully smug look on her face as she both teased Marshal rather unjustly and soothed out a ruffle in her sundress. The tease earned her nothing more than a light slug on her shoulder (an action that prompted an indignant look from her) from Marshal as he just shook his head and sighed.

“Alright. I’d be… lying if I didn’t say I didn’t appreciate it,” Marshal awkwardly acknowledged, beginning to set a pace for the two of them to follow.

And falling in right behind him, Indica just mirror the shake of his head and just softly muttered, “You need as much sleep as you can get, Marshy. You’ve not gotten a good day of sleep for most of the year. Not since, well. Beacon.”

“We’re lost,” Tully growled in a low enough tone to startle Sierra right out of the trance that she was walking in.

“Are not!” Sierra squeaked back. After a brief pause, she simply added, “I’ve just been trusting you to know which way we’re going.”

“Yet you’re leading the way?” came a snark back.

“You’re normally demanding enough that –”

“Sierra,” Tully interjected.

“Sorry…”

With a small groan, Tully stopped fishing around in the black purse that hung lazily on her left side with her only hand and instead started to rub her temples with her middle finger and her thumb. “Look,” Tully began, the annoyance fading from her voice to just simply be replaced disappointment, “let’s just take a break. I’m almost half-sure that Indica sent us up ahead anyways because she wanted to be alone with Marshal.”

Sierra’s face blanked for just a few seconds, but it was a long enough period for the look of annoyance to start to creep back up on Tully’s face. “I… yeah…” Sierra softly babbled. Lazily, she started to look skywards, before just settling herself against a tree and leaning against it. Slowly, she slid down it to the ground, the blanket-of-a-cloak that she wore sliding up and going over as her head as she did so while Tully took to tending to more practical things. It took her just a moment to get it back alongside her, and as she fished through one of the many pockets in her grey-green cargo pants, she called out, “Hey, Tully?”

A bright red crystal of Dust held in between her teeth, Tully just had to pause and look at Sierra for a moment before she finally decided to take the Dust out of her mouth. “Yes, dear?” she flatly asked as she gentled tossed said crystal into a bit of the clearing in the woods around them. As Tully heard Sierra begin her response, her maroon gaze slowly drifted to the trees around them, even daring to look back at the setting sun behind them while Sierra finally spoke.

“Are you… angry with me?”

“Am I ever angry with you?” Tully responded without even turning back. For a moment longer, her gaze lingered away from Sierra before it finally turned back in, and she added, “Don’t actually answer that. No, Sierra. I’m not actually angry with you. I’m just always frustrated. You know that.”

“Well, yeah, but –” Sierra tried to respond, before Tully cut her off.

“Sierra, no. I’m not. Now, could you hand me one of your knives?”

Blinking slowly as she stared into the eyes of her teammate, Sierra slowly nodded before she asked, “Which one?”

“One of the ones with rock Dust.” Nodding, Sierra reached into her dark green cloak and slid out a knife from behind her and tossed it over to Tully. Catching it, with a surge of auburn aura, Tully traced out a line on the ground around the fire Dust crystal, and behind the blade trailed an outcropping of rocks. Once her little circle was complete, Tully tossed the knife back to Sierra. “Thanks,” Tully said, “now, do you have any plant Dust still?”

Sierra shook her head no.

“Alright then. I guess we’ll be waiting for –” Tully began, before getting interrupted by the sound of a twig cracking. Though only a yawn came from Sierra in response, Tully’s eyes darted to it, but she failed to spot anything. “Sierra.”

“Yes Tully?”

“We might have company—”

“It’s just us!” Indica shouted. Quickly pushing her way through the underbrush, she made her way closer to Tully and Sierra, a bundle of twigs and sticks in her hands. “We struggled finding you guys; you two… kinda veered off course a lot.”

“Well, you left the airhead and the bitch without either of the two people on this team with any actual survival skills,” Tully shot back, rolling her eyes. “The only thing we had to go off of were the distant cracks of that genki girl stereotype’s weapon firing, and you know how hard she is to follow.”

“I… well… yeah, I mean, I guess,” Indica muttered back as Marshal finally caught up to the rest of the team. As she started to arrange the twigs in a square around the red Dust crystal, she added, “I know you don’t like Vi, but she’s not the only one we’re helping out here. Besides, weren’t *you* the one who wanted to try to avoid the relocation programs that were going on after Beacon fell?”

“Because I didn’t want to risk having to go back to Atlas!” Tully snapped. Her mouth was already open to continue her tirade when Marshal interjected.

“And that’s why we’re working with Team Void, Tully, as well as Team Alice, remember? None of us wanted to lose each other as a whole, and especially not risk our teams if the rumours of Vacuo’s headmaster breaking teams upheld any truth. I know Vi can be a bit… much sometimes, Tully, as well as most of Void, but Alice was right when she pointed out that neither of our teams could likely make this trek alone. Once we get to Mistral, we’ll be dealin’ with ‘em even less, yeah? Just a bit longer.”

It was apparent to all on the team that Tully had zoned out to whatever he was saying halfway through, but the anger in her maroon eyes was equally gone. With a small sigh, Marshal added, “It was your turn to pick dinner today, Tully. Any preference?”

“Not beans.”

“Alright. Indica, can you get started on some rice? I think I’m going to take a nap,” Marshal asked in a weak voice.

“On it,” she replied, eyeing him with a small amount of both concern and suspicion. “Would you like me to save you any for when you’re on watch?”

“Nah. I’m not hungry,” Marshal lied, even if everyone around the campfire besides Sierra could easily tell he was lying. “Just wake me if anyone from Void or Alice shows up or when it’s my time to go on watch.”

“…alright.”