Fall of Beacon Plan



So the purpose of this doc is that I'm going to break down, in my opinion, why I think Cinder's plan to destroy Beacon was nearly full-proof and why it's a genius scheme. Buckle up, this is wordy.



"They'd be scratching their heads long after we finished what we came here for."

Cinder's plan has the least presence in Volume 1, though that's more due to Volume 1 thinking it was too cool for things like plots and overarching narratives. But more seriously, the Volume 1 part of the plan needed some quiet reworking after Cinder's power source was changed.

See, Cinder wasn't originally a Maiden.

In fact, the Maidens only existed after Volume 2 had wrapped.

CRWBY have been quite open about this plot change, as it was one Monty came up with prior to his untimely death.

Cinder instead would have simply been a powerful Dust Mage who was using the Dust Roman stole to gain power for herself and the White Fang.

In all honesty going from using Dust-infused clothing to the Maiden powers was one of the smoother

retcons in RWBY's history, especially compared to some of the more egregious incidents like the handling of Aura.

So Cinder quietly went from a Dust user to someone with half the powers of a Maiden Ultimately since most of the major elements in Cinder's scheme such as Ironwood, the transfer students or the mech army are present, Cinder herself has little to do in Volume 1 after saving Roman and looking Mysterious.

(Planning - Contingency, Versatility, Deception)

And that's the point. Roman's part of the plan is to be as attention-seeking as possible, Cinder's plan relies on Roman getting all eyes on him as he steals as much Dust as he can carry. Not only does he deplete reserves that go into the White Fang and her own pockets, but it also creates distrust in Vale, brewing up tensions that the White Fang use

to radicalize more people and bolster their numbers.



(Strategy - Deception, Tactics - Complexity, Versatility, Risk Assessment, Deception)

Volume 2 marks the point where Cinder begins making deliberate steps on her plan. Now that Ironwood (and his ships with all their robots and big guns) have arrived along with the transfer students now entering Beacon, Cinder has the perfect cover to slip into Beacon undetected thanks to the security nightmare that is the Vytal Festival

alongside Mercury and Emerald (and Neo I suppose), and she wastes no time with setting the stage. Mercury is immediately set out to analyse the most powerful fighters at Beacon and figure out their Semblances ahead of time. Emerald meanwhile played social butterfly, getting in good with some of the teams and sneakily learning who they were sending forward ahead of the matches. And Neo... was busy helping Roman and likely only appeared in the first episode of Volume 3 so people wouldn't ask who the fourth person on Cinder's team was. This was mostly a three-man mission after Cinder got to Beacon while Roman and Adam prepped for the bigger events.

(Information - Gathering, Processing; Planning - Short-Term, Versatility, Deception; Manipulation - Event, Direct)

Even here, Cinder was already setting up three chess pieces of her own in her master-stroke to take down Ozpin: The assaulter, the murderer and

the patsy. Barring the murderer (who was almost always going to be Pyrrha because Cinder loves dramatic irony and nothing's better than a champion helping cause the apocalypse), these roles could have been taken by nearly anyone. Once Cinder knew which team members would advance, she could play around them. Hell, if Cinder hadn't learned about Penny's robotic nature, things could have easily been set up for Pyrrha to kill someone else instead.

(Planning - Contingency, Versatility, Deception)

Cinder even manages to spin a school dance in her favor. It may seem on the service like some harmless fluff between the big battle episodes, but the dance arc episodes are made critically important through Cinder's infiltration of the CCT and planting of Watts' Queen Virus, alongside the episodes themselves letting us see Mercury and Emerald's parts of the plan. With this in play along with the

White Fang, Cinder had half the work done for the Fall of Beacon before RWBY even had a clue she existed.

(Deception - Practical; Manipulation - Event, Direct; Planning - Long-Term, Versatility)

Talking of RWBY, it's interesting how they never really had a chance at stopping Cinder. Thanks to Roman hogging the spotlight, RWBY genuinely think they've stopped his plans entirely after the Breach. Qrow has to tell Yang and Ruby that yes, crime's down, but every hydra's got another head. Cinder basically sets Roman up as a patsy, and I think it's safe to say she didn't really care if Roman lived or died after the Breach. If he happened to live, then she could use that and send Neo to break him out before they caused more damage during the Fall, but it wasn't a be-all-or-end-all if Roman died early. Regardless, the Breach was a giant distraction, a gambit that Cinder intended to lose.

It was one that RWBY jump-started early, but the results were ultimately the exact same.

(Manipulation - Scapegoating, Event; Deception - Practical, Emotional)

There was no hopes of the Breach being enough to take out Beacon, even if Cinder, Emerald and Mercury had personally joined the fight. Its goal was always to make Ozpin's leadership look incompetent. Under his watch, with the Vytal Festival looming on the horizon, a massive terror attack occurs and Ozpin is left looking like a headless chicken. People being to distrust Ozpin, the council gives James new privileges and more emphasis is placed on the Atlas military for security reasons. Which, with the Queen virus in place, is exactly what Cinder wants. The more androids on the night of the Fall, the more images of Atlas mechs firing on civilians to fill the nightly news. The Breach was never Cinder's endgame- to quote @alexkablob, it was just Act 2.

(Reasoning - Causal, Counterfactual; Strategy - Medium-Term - Complexity, Versatility, Deception, Resilience)

With Volume 3, the stage is set. Once Ironwood connects his scroll to the CCT, Cinder has access to all of his personal files, and that gives her the cherry on top for her Murder Souffle. With Penny, Cinder has just been given the prime target to set up as the fall guy for the Fall of Beacon.

(Information - Control, Manipulation)

Also on the subject of the Vytal Festival, can you imagine what it must have been like to be the first year team that had to fight Team CMSN? Two trained assassins, a master illusionist whose stealth skills make her just as lethal as the assassins, and a 23-year-old posing as a teenager in leather pants who didn't even use a weapon to kick your ass. The whole "How'd your team do?" Emerald flashes back to her team ripping some first years a new asshole "... Really well." joke is one of the best gags in all of RWBY BTW.



With her hacking of the CCT, Cinder basically just needed to do one fight and then she could sit back and enjoy the fireworks. She had her Actor in Mercury, and after watching the Vytal matches, it was easy to find someone with a short temper who the crowd could believe was willing to shoot an injured man after he'd already lost, breaking his leg.

(Deception - Practical, Fabrication; Manipulation - Event, Direct)





Penny was the perfect target to die, but make no mistake, Cinder would have used anyone else as the victim. Heck, in an alternate timeline, whose to say someone like Ruby wasn't the one gutted on Pyrrha's spear in the Vytal finals?

Pyrrha, however, was always going to be the Murderer in this little stage play of Cinder's. Cinder likely pegged Pyrrha as one of the candidates to become the new Fall Maiden early on, and if she hadn't before the finals, seeing Pyrrha and Ozpin enter the CCT was the red flag she needed. Pyrrha was the Invincible Girl, the one everyone knew as a hero, greatest Huntress of her generation, and she was someone who it wouldn't look suspicious if she curbstomped all of her enemies. Why else does JNPR fight BRNZ, a team with at least one

electrical weapon, in an environment that spawns thunder? Neptune's weapon also would have likely supercharged Nora, so the SN vs NP match that was cut for time would have had a similar outcome (including another water biome). Pyrrha was really the perfect person to take to the finals, and her polarity Semblance just made Penny that much better a target.

(Reasoning - Analogical, Deductive; Planning - Short-Term, Versatility)

To further my point, here's a stellar post made by @alexkablob, with the relevant part quoted

- *But she (Cinder) 100% wanted Pyrrha, specifically, to be the one who killed her opponent in the finals, and she wanted that as early as volume 2. Because Pyrrha is the Invincible Girl, she's the greatest huntress of her generation, she's the world's icon, she's a hero in the making, she's on the cover of every Pumpkin Pete's Marshmallow Flakes box. And*

Cinder wanted to take that image and tear it down for the entire world to see.

(Emotional Manipulation; Deception - Emotional)

So when the finals came around, after the crowd had already seen barbarism from Yang, Pyrrha's shoddy mental state after the last few days combined with Emerald's Semblance to make a show no one ever forgot.

(Deception - Emotional, Practical; Manipulation - Direct)



Once the Fall kicked off, everything went straight to hell in a handbasket. The mechs went rogue, Adam's White Fang brought Grimm in and caused chaos while an army of Grimm charged Vale. Cinder cut the broadcast on Atlesian mechs firing on civilians, all while delivering a monologue that nailed home just how utterly screwed everyone was. The Huntsmen were scattered, and the fleet was firing on itself thanks to Roman.

(Strategy - Medium-Term - Risk Assessment; Reasoning - Moral)

Which let Cinder lead Ozpin into the final stage of her plan.

Cinder needed Ozpin to come out onto the battlefield, so that the CCT would be unguarded. Ozpin would be forced to choose between the people he swore to protect, the citizens and Huntsmen who he tries to care for as people and as children, and a sickly, dying woman. If he wasn't there, her chances of finding Amber and killing her skyrocketed. The only way it could be better was if Ozpin basically led her right to the Maiden.

(Strategy - Complexity, Risk Assessment, Deception)

And with that arrow, Cinder wins. She's got this in the bag, she just got the full Maiden powerset, Ozpin is alone because his need to put The Men First meant that he sent Qrow and Glynda into the

city instead of staying with him to protect Amber and the Vale Relic.

(Strategy - Medium-Term - Risk Assessment; Reasoning - Moral)

As an aside, look at their faces.



The logical option here is to double down on protection of the Relic and Amber, a few more casualties cannot hope to compare to the destruction that Salem can wreak with a maiden on

her side. But Salem knows what option Ozpin will pick, what he can't help but choose again and again no matter how many times it does him over.

(Reasoning - Moral, Counterfactual)

Glynda and Qrow come to him, looking for direction amid the panic, torn between what they know are their duties, and he tells them to leave, to go to the city. Their enemies are coming for the vault, and they don't know how many of them there are, how powerful the opposition might be, but Ozpin chooses to go alone. Cinder later calls it arrogance but Salem knows better.

(Deception - Emotional, Moral Manipulation)

Even knowing that he's dooming them all, even knowing that he's likely marching to his own death, Ozpin will always pick the safety of his people above all else.

(Reasoning - Moral)

And in that moment, all three of them knew it.

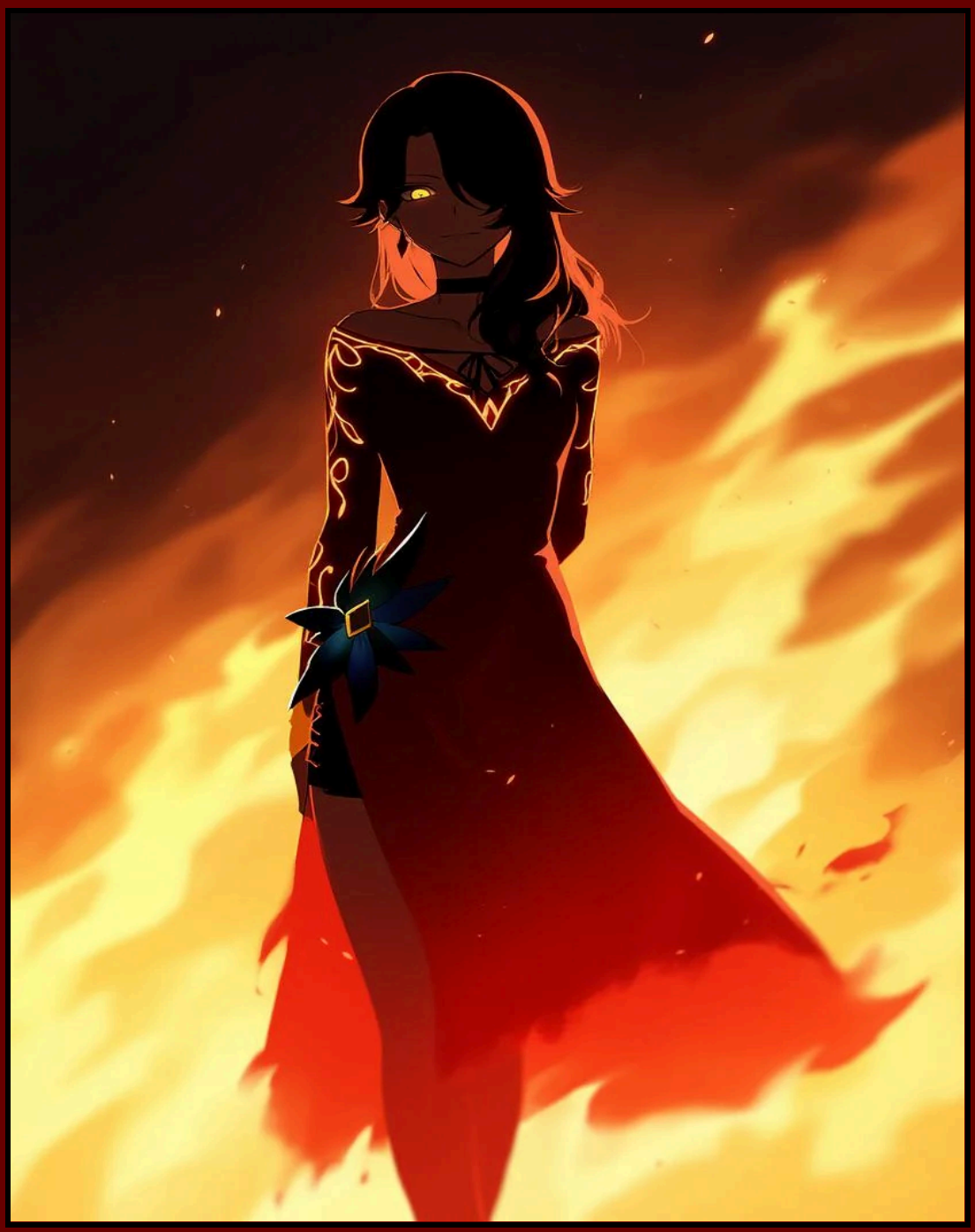
Cinder makes short work of Ozpin after this, even with all of his experience she immolates him. After that, before going to secure the Relic, she returns to Ozpin's office to lord over her victory. And gee, it's almost like Cinder's big weakness is that she's prideful and will always take time to gloat before confirming the mission's complete! Like, seriously, if Cinder just grabbed the Relic and snuck out of Vale with Em and Merc, she'd have been clear. Roman and Neo would have likely died and taken a lot of the heat posthumously and Cinder would have had perfect checkmate.

(Reasoning - Counterfactual; Planning - Contingency, Versatility, Deception)

But she had to go to his office, and she had to gloat. Meaning she had to fight Pyrrha and had to

kill her, meaning she had to take Ruby's Silver Eyes right to the face. Because you can have the best damn plan, but if you let your ego control you, the best laid plans often go awry.

In conclusion, Cinder's plan throughout Volumes 1-3 is perfectly laid out and designed in such a way that Cinder was able to make rapid adjustments on the fly. Thanks to using Roman and the Breach as scapegoats, she diverted attention away from her (in spite of Qrow nearly seeing her face when she went for Amber), her underlings were able to assist in pinpointing who would be fighting and when, and Watts' Queen Virus let her wreak havoc on Beacon when the time came. Cinder's plan is genuinely a well-written masterplan; the pieces were on the board right from the start, but only in hindsight did we see everything after all we knew and loved had come crumbling down around us.



“This is not a tragedy. This was not an accident. This is what happens when you hand over your trust, your safety, your children, to men who claim to be our guardians but are in

reality nothing more than men. Our academies' headmasters wield more power than most armies, and one was audacious enough to control both.

They cling to this power in the name of peace, and yet, what do we have here? One nation's attempt at a synthetic army mercilessly torn apart by another's star pupil. What need would Atlas have for a soldier disguised as an innocent little girl? I don't think the Grimm can tell the difference. And what, I ask you, is Ozpin teaching his students? First, a dismemberment, now this? Huntsmen and Huntresses should carry themselves with honor and mercy, yet I have witnessed neither.

Perhaps Ozpin felt as though defeating Atlas in the tournament would help people forget his colossal failure to protect Vale when the Grimm invaded its streets. Or perhaps this was his message to the tyrannical dictator that has occupied an unsuspecting kingdom with armed forces. Honestly, I haven't the slightest clue as to who is right and who is wrong, but I know that the existence of peace is fragile, and the leaders of our kingdoms conduct their business with iron gloves. As someone who hails from Mistral, I can assure you the situation there is equally undesirable.

Our kingdoms are at the brink of war, yet we, the citizens, are left in the dark. So, I ask you, when the first shots are fired, who do you think you can trust?”