

— *January 1st, 1918. Ruheplatz, Lower Saxony, 1:00 P.M.* —

Frieda and Irma stayed inside the general store, warming up from being thrown into the snow by Aigis. Marckel poured them both some non-alcoholic apple cider, which helped warm them up. Their clothes likely burned down along with the house, so they were stuck in their nightgowns in freezing weather. The best Marckel could manage was some old curtains from his home to serve as makeshift cloaks. After the two had adequately warmed up, they returned to the charred remains of what was once their home. Not even the skeleton of the walls remained. Frieda walked through the rubble, assessing the damage. In her hand, a wallet Aigis dropped before she left. It was Vergil's, filled up with so much cash the thing could barely fold anymore. The wallet had bits of his blood splotted onto it. Irma touched the blackened couch, where she used to take naps when she started working with the young couple.

“So this is it, huh?” Irma wistfully remarked, more to herself than her daughter. “It hasn't even felt like twenty years since I first got here.”

Frieda could hear her mother's pain in her voice. She had often told Frieda in private during Aigis' absence that she felt that things became worse after Johanna's disappearance. Now she's been basically proven right. Frieda didn't respond, wanting to give the poor woman some space. Frieda found that the entrance to the basement was still clear. She went inside. All of the books that scattered all across the floor were now nothing more than ash. Frieda used her foot to kick over the piles of the black texts. She found two books that had miraculously not been burnt to a crisp. She picked them up and took them out of the basement. It read “The Beginner's Guide to Unlocking Your Psychokinetic Powers”.

She opened up the book and caressed the interior. Some of the pages got scorched, but for the most part, it was still perfectly legible.

“Good. I can still read some of it.” She approved herself. She came back upstairs to the open air to find Irma sitting on the charred remains of the couch, looking to the sky with her eyes closed. A light snowfall covered her, causing her to shiver. She heard Frieda approaching and opened her eyes to look at her daughter. She noticed the black-spotted book in her hand.

“What are you doing with that?” Irma asked.

Frieda laid her eyes on the book. “Aigis is in pain. And I’m going to save her.”

“Frieda, no. It’s too dangerous.” Irma scolded.

“I can’t leave her with the Battalion. They might turn on her!”

“Those men will shoot you down before you can even say hello. And if they don’t finish you off, Aigis’ powers will.”

“I’m going to stop her the only way I know how,” Frieda declares, looking off into the distance. “I don’t know how long I’ll be gone, but…”

“I just don’t want to be left alone, Frieda. We don’t even have a home to come back to.”

Frieda remembered Vergil’s wallet with the money. She flipped through his wallet, counting the papiermark notes in the wallet. 300 papiermarks. A little more than enough to move anywhere in Europe and still have money leftover.

“For your safety, I would find another country to live in. Just in case Aigis ever gets too violent. Marckel said he’d be willing to let us stay at his place until we could figure out a plan.”

Irma cautiously accepted her late boyfriend’s wallet. She looked at Frieda, trying to put on her bravest face. Her daughter put a hand on her shoulder.

“I’ll come back once my training is complete. Think of it as a very long camping trip. Alright, mom?”

Biting her lip, Irma nodded. She didn't want to let Frieda go, but she knew she was born to be something special as well. Frieda brought in the 36-year-old for a hug, hoping to help stave off any tears.

"I wholeheartedly regret my relationship with Vergil. It only brought one good thing into this world."

"What's that?"

Irma gave her a kiss on the forehead. "You."

Frieda pulled away.

"Good luck out there. Make me proud."

"I will, mom."