

— *July 10th, 1921. Rabauke Beer Hall, 11:35 P.M.* —

Aigis and Oswald's years on the streets were about as easy as trying to run with a broken leg. They were always cold and wet, and even with Aigis constantly stealing for them, they could never get enough food. It didn't take very long for their faces and uniforms to start getting dirty. Aigis' hair grew out, and it eventually grew so long, part of her hair covered her eye. They couldn't afford new clothes and had to keep their World War I uniforms on. They started to smell rancid from the lack of hygiene, giving off the odors of rotten cabbage and sour milk. The sidewalk was possibly the most uncomfortable makeshift bed, and it didn't help that a passerby would accidentally step on their bodies while walking by. Miraculously, throughout all of this, Oswald never cracked. He didn't complain, he didn't cry, he never even got mad. Every day, he would either sing a song to Aigis or tell her a funny anecdote to make the time go faster. Aigis, whether or not she realized it at the time, had an easier time keeping her sanity thanks to that.

The one thing Aigis didn't regret about joining the Golden Battalion was the Luger P08 that she got to keep after the Battalion's disbandment. There was a small pot she and Oswald used to keep the few marks they had together. Aigis would then use that money to buy food and necessities for them. Sometimes, someone would try to sneak by and steal their money. This is when Aigis would pull out her gun and say "Keep walking, pal". The sight of the firearm alone would make any thief or mugger run away in fear, as they had no desire to mess with a crazy woman and her companion.

This particular muggy Sunday night, Aigis and Oswald laid on the warm summer concrete, trying to get some sleep. Oswald had no trouble sleeping, but Aigis kept churning in her sleep. Tonight, they chose the outside of a beer hall to sleep, but there was incessant shouting

coming from inside the establishment. After a while, Aigis threw off her covers (some homeless man's coat) and stood up. Oswald woke up and slowly shifted his head to look at her.

"Where are you going?" he asked in his sleepy voice.

"Wanna know why there's so much damn noise coming from this hall." Aigis grumbled. Oswald slowly stood up and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. He trailed behind Aigis as she opened up the doors to the beer hall. Inside, a bunch of men wearing either imperial army uniforms or just regular clothes. All of them stared in awe at the center stage. The stage was decorated with red banners that had a white disc, containing a black swastika in the middle. Aigis then realized that all the men in the beer hall had a red armband on their left sleeves, except theirs had white stripes on it. Aigis then found the source of the noise: A dark brown-haired man with a short-cut mustache stood at the podium, giving a speech. He was extremely angry, ranting. His hair became disheveled and his face turned beet red. His fist pounded on the wooden podium, and every time he spoke, the audience cheered him on.

"HEY, CHARLIE CHAPLIN!" Aigis jeered, causing the man to stop his speech. All of the men in the beer hall turned to look at the young homeless woman, all with a look of offense.

"Can you shut the hell up?! I'm trying to sleep!" She continued. The men looked at each other, and then back at the mustached man. They murmured among themselves, unsure of how to react. One of the men stood up and charged at Aigis. Oswald jumped back, moving away from Aigis. The angry man managed to grab Aigis by the collar and slammed her against the wall. Aigis didn't budge or wince, and stared blankly at him.

"Who do you think you are?! Do you have any idea who you just interrupted?!"

The mustached man walked up beside the man. "Schultz, what is the matter?"

*Schultz?* Aigis knew she recognized that poor temper and horrible breath. He still wore his imperial uniform, which was slightly dirty.

“Herr Hitler! she just waltzed right in here and interrupted you! I’m gonna teach this dirty whore some manners!”

Hitler held a hand up, signaling Schultz to stand by. He looked Aigis in the eye, the same look of recognition. Aigis had heard of him before during her time in the Golden Battalion, since he also served during the war. He then looked down at the Luger that hung around her waist, then back at her.

“You,” he pointed. “What’s your name?”

“Aigis Schumacher. Why?”

His face suddenly lit up. He turned to Schultz. “Let her go.”

“Really?” Schultz said, surprised. He did what his leader ordered, and stood back.

“She’s just as much of a veteran as you and I. Veterans are always welcome within these walls.”

Schultz took another look at Aigis. “Wait a minute. That’s *you*, Greenie?”

“I’m wearing the exact same uniform, idiot.”

Schultzed scoffed. “Shit, my bad. I didn’t recognize you with the long hair.”

Aigis brushed off her clothes. She exaggerated her clothes brushing to insult Schultz a little. Hitler approached Aigis and shook her hand.

“I heard about the work you did for the imperial army. You did a great service, even though it didn’t last long.”

“I did what I had to do,” She responded. “So what’s this all about?”

“This is the National Socialist German Workers Party. You can call it that, NSDAP, Nazi, it’s entirely up to you. We all come together for a single cause: To make Germany a great nation once again!”

“Have you heard of *me*, Herr Hitler?” Oswald ran up to the mustached man, bouncing like a little kid. Oswald did not know who Hitler was or even what was going on. He just got caught up in the moment.

“Ah, yes!” Hitler smiled, trying not to let Oswald know he didn’t know who he was. “You’re...”

“Oswald. Oswald Volkmann.”

Hitler tried to keep his smile. He had no clue who this boy was. He simply patted the young man on the head in a stilted manner. “Right... I know exactly who you are. You have done an incredible job for the fatherland.”

Aigis crossed her arms. “If you’re trying to sell me something, go ahead and get it over with. If not, I have more important things to do, like sleeping.”

“The only thing I’m selling you is some hospitality. You’re a veteran, you fought to protect Germany. And look what happens to you and Oswald. On the streets, without a home or food. You deserve some shelter. Food. Camaraderie. A purpose. I can give you all of that.”

“So what do we do?” Oswald asked.

“Sit down. Have a drink, hang around. Sit down and listen to one of my speeches. I’d just hate for you to end up back on the streets. You both deserve much more than that.”

Oswald looked to Aigis. “What do you think?”

Aigis shrugged, uncaring. “I’ll do it for the food and shelter.”

“I’ll do it because Aigis wants to!” Oswald happily saluted.