

— *October 8th, 1914. Outside the Schumacher House, 6:28 A.M.* —

The lynching of Otto dealt an extremely devastating blow to the sisters. Frieda went into a shock of sorts. For one, the young girl hadn't slept at all days after. Dark circles clouded the skin around her eyes. She didn't inch anywhere near a bed or a couch or a chair or any other area where she could comfortably fall asleep. The moment she felt her eyes close or her head droop, she punched herself in the face. And when that failed, she ran laps around the house. She made damn sure she didn't sit still for even a moment. On top of that, she refused to eat. She refused to drink. All she ever did was run, and hit herself. She remembered she overheard Johanna teaching Aigis about years ago. Psychokinetic abilities flourish when one's body is in great, healthy shape. She knew she was unawakened for quite a while, but never felt the drive to actually learn. She was content with just watching Aigis use hers at home. Things were different now. Frieda swore to herself that she would do anything and everything to keep her dormant powers sealed away.

Aigis began feeling a sensation after the death of Otto. It would come in waves. Overtake her body one moment, then dissipate the next. At random times of the day, her skin itched. More like tingling. No matter how much Aigis scratched at her tingling arms and legs, it never stopped. Even after she broke the skin, it never stopped. Then it would go away on its own. It was at these moments that Aigis would look at her hand. The same hand that saved him from falling down the stairs. The hand that doomed Otto to being hung from a tree by a paranoid Empire. She wanted to snap the wrist of that hand. Chop it off. Burn it. The sinful hand that cast a young boy to his death. She didn't even look Frieda in the eye. She was the one that killed the boy she loved. Snatched her sister's future husband away from her. Aigis refused to face her until she found a way to repent for what she's done.

Vergil and Aigis were outside in the early hours of the morning, trying to perfect Aigis' nuclear attack magic. He noticed that she was performing extremely poorly today. She did not attempt to defend herself against his relentless assaults. She just stood there idly as his magic collided with her body. Each impact made a noticeable bruise. It was as if she was begging him to beat her.

"What is the matter? Your performance today is abysmal." Vergil scolded. Aigis' hair blew in the wind.

"It's nothing." Aigis dismissed. She kept her body rigid.

"If it was 'nothing', you would have attempted to at least *dodge* my attacks. Out with it."

Aigis grabbed onto her arm, not looking her father in the eye. "Our friend Otto, he... was killed by the Empire."

"Oh, the... human boy." Vergil croaked. Aigis tried to continue speaking, but her throat closed on her. She wanted to speak, but couldn't get any air in. Her eyes stung as choked out her words, body trembling.

"It's my own fault!" She squeaked, stomping her foot into the ground. "If I didn't save him from falling, he would still be alive. The Empire didn't kill him. I did. I took him away."

For a minute, Vergil just stood there, watching his daughter break down. He approached the sobbing teenager and placed a hand gently on her shoulder. Aigis took a glance into his eyes. It was a look she had never seen before in her father. Was he actually... sympathetic for once? He took a breath, shaking Aigis a little before he spoke.

"Suck it up." He declared. His voice was flat as a plateau. Robotic, icy, unfeeling.

"Wha...?" Aigis sniveled.

"You heard me. He died. Who cares?"

How could he dismiss her feelings like that? Not just Aigis', Frieda lost the boy she loved for years. Yet Vergil described it as a meaningless event, as if his death had about as much significance as a speck of pollen floating in the wind. Vergil turned his back to her, his trench coat flowing behind him like a cape. He stepped away from her.

"Now, let's continue the train—"

"A boy died, father," Aigis scornfully growled. "A friend."

Vergil groaned. He put both hands on his hips as he turned back to Aigis. Strands of his black hair fluttered in the wind.

"He was a no-blood, Aigis. Just a speck of random discharge from the Lifestream. Insignificant."

In that moment, Aigis gained an unnaturally clear focus on Vergil. A focus so clear that every detail of his body was crystal clear, every twitch of his eye, every shift in his posture. The crust in the side of his eyes. The sweat rolling down his cheek. The stubble in his beard. The slight discoloration in his neck. Every last disgusting detail.

"He was a PERSON!" She screamed at the top of her lungs, so loudly her lungs felt a tingle of numbness. Her shout shocked Vergil enough for him to take a step backward.

"They don't see us that way," Vergil lamented, still furrowing his brow. "How could you lick the boots of a boy who belongs to a people that see you as an outsider? Let me tell you something: People are not your friends. They never have been, and they never will be."

Vergil took a step forward. Throwing up a hand, he used wind magic to blow a gust of wind towards Aigis, knocking her to the ground. He towered over the coughing 15-year-old. The whole front of his body cast a dark shadow.

“When did I raise you to be such a spineless, sniveling dog, taking affection from any direction you can get it?” He gritted, practically spitting onto his daughter.

Aigis slowly pushed herself off the ground, not caring about the blades of grass and dirt decorating her dress. She kept her head down, hiding her burning eyes. An alien, freezing sensation coursed through her body. It made her want to shiver. Despite how unnatural it felt, the sensation usurped the feeling of self-deprivation and surrender. All on her mind was a thirst. No, a desire. A desire to rip this gap-toothed man’s jaw off so he could no longer be able to speak for the rest of his old, sad life.

Vergil’s stone-faced leer softened. Somehow, even he could sense a surge in Aigis that had never been present before. A faint, red mist surrounded itself around Aigis. Vergil rubbed his eyes with his knuckles to confirm it wasn’t a hallucination. He raised a cautious hand, ready to use magic in the case things escalated. Aigis finally lifted her head to look Vergil in the eye. They glowed crimson with an intensity Vergil had never seen in her eyes.

Before Aigis made a single movement, Vergil leapt backward. Aigis immediately threw a nuclear fireball at where he was previously standing. At least Vergil thought it was her regular nuclear magic. Instead of a sky blue, the magic pulsated with a blood red aura. The speed, power, and velocity of the fireball was infinitely greater than what Vergil thought the girl to be capable of.

Aigis kicked off the ground, launching herself toward her father. A pile of dirt ejected from behind her like an earthly explosion. She threw a punch at Vergil, but he caught it with his right hand. She retracted her fist and threw lightning-quick flurries of kicks and punches at him. The middle-aged man held his own, parrying her punches and dodging kicks. Aigis managed to

kick him in the ribcage, winding him temporarily. Continuing the relentless assault, Aigis threw another punch at Vergil, her fist burning with red hot flames.

Vergil shot up a hand and blocked the punch with his palm. He locked his fingers onto Aigis' fist as her hand began to freeze over, immobilizing her left fist. She threw another punch with her opposite hand, but Vergil caught and froze that one too. Aigis wound up her head and slammed it into Vergil, smashing the bridge of his nose in one powerful headbutt. His entire vision went bright white as he staggered backward. With one of her legs, she swept Vergil's feet, knocking him down. She shut her eyes and concentrated on her ice-coated hands. They shattered and Aigis shook her newly-freed hands.

Vergil got back up and started walking backwards. Aigis wasn't having any of it. In one palm, she concentrated dark, nuclear energy. She squinted, trying to focus the mass into something dense and powerful. Something compact and deadly. Vergil had never seen an exercise like this from his daughter before.

She launched it towards his leg. The energy sizzled as it impacted his leg. A sharp, snapping sound rang out in the open air as Vergil winced loudly, fell backward, and slammed his back into the ground. The sounds of combat dissipated in the air. Aigis panted heavily, sweat soaking the interior of her dress. The desire in her also faded, replaced by a heightened awareness of her surroundings. It was like a relief, but at the same time like a thirst for more. She couldn't explain it.

One sound did creep its way to Aigis' ears. Vergil's laugh. A broken, dried-up cackle that took his lungs every ounce of energy to hack up.

“Good.” He sneered. Vergil sat up and got on both legs. He wobbled towards Aegis, hobbling on his shattered leg, forcing a pained grin on his face. Without warning, he grabbed Aegis’ hand. He took his other hand and placed it on top of hers.

“This... Anger. This visceral, burning hatred. Hold onto it.”

Those were the only cryptic words he delivered to her before he hobbled back to the house, nursing his bloodied, fractured shin. Aegis stood in the wind as she watched her father walk off into the distance.