

Note: SA-Mann (Lit: SA-Man/Trooper) is the lowest rank of the SA, below an SA-Sturmmann (Storm man/trooper). It is the SA equivalent of a private, as Sturmmann is a senior private.

— *May 31th, 1927. Munich Catholic Church, 4:20 P.M.* —

Oswald and Hannelore's wedding was interesting to say the least. In terms of the actual ceremony, the two of them had made it through the rites with a minimum of fuss and fanfare. In the pews, however, things were another matter. The entire church was split up into two factions: The pews left of the corridor were Hannelore's family. The issue was that they were all Ashekenazi Jews. Considering Oswald's profession, she had to convince all the family who attended their wedding to not dress the way they normally would, and instead needed to pass off as a regular Germanic Catholic. Most of them, Hannelore's parents especially, felt insulted as they always wanted her to have a traditional Jewish wedding.

On the right of the corridor were Oswald's companions from work. The issue? All of them were in the SA, and even came to the wedding in uniform. Oswald considered wearing his uniform to the wedding, but Hannelore's family was already short with him, so he opted out. In a venue where Jews and Nazis were crammed in the same building, the situation was a powder keg. However, they did manage to keep everything peaceful, and the wedding went off without a hitch.

Aigis sat in the front row to support her best friend. To her left sat Himmler. To her right, Hitler. She noticed that Hitler was grumbling the whole time during the ceremony.

"Herr Hitler," She whispered, nudging him. "Is there something wrong?"

"Kurtz," He spat conspiratorially to himself. "That's a rat's name."

"A *rat*, mein Führer?"

“A Jew. Poor Volkmann was seduced and corrupted by a Jew.” He insulted. His voice quivered a bit, as if he genuinely was heartbroken Oswald decided to marry a non-Germanic woman.

“You don’t know that. It could just be an old family name.” Aigis rebutted.

“Eat your candy, sir.” Himmler tossed Hitler a hard candy. Hitler popped it in his mouth and suckled on the sweet candy, though clearly still upset about it.

The wedding ended soon after that. It was time for the reception, where Oswald and Hannelore were set to mingle with their guests. Everyone in attendance, from Hannelore to Hitler, were in agreement: That the wedding reception was probably the most awkward part of the whole ordeal. The Nazi Party and Jewish family members of Hannelore did their best to be cordial to one another. There were a few snide remarks and insults thrown around, but no punches were thrown.

Hannelore’s parents went over to hug their daughter. They were an older couple, the man tall and imposing and the woman petite and soft-spoken.

“You’re finally a married woman! It feels like only yesterday you were a little girl playing with the neighbor children in the garden!” Her mother remarked, wiping a tear from her eye. Hannelore embraced both her parents. Her father looked over her shoulder and shot a look at Oswald. Oswald waved warmly at him, somehow not detecting the hateful stare. Hannelore took note of this, and broke the embrace.

“Hi, Oswald Volkmann, your daughter’s new husband.” He cheerfully shook her father’s hand. He reluctantly reciprocated the gesture. Her father then let go, wiping the hand she shook Oswald’s with on his pants.

“So what’s your rank, military man?” Her mother questioned. She tried to come off as warm, but her word choice and tone made it sound like she was interrogating him.”

“Oh, the SA isn’t a military. It's paramilitary.”

“Well, what’s your rank?”

Oswald rubbed the back of his neck. “I’m just an SA-Mann. They said they’ll promote me to SA-Sturmmann in a year or two if I stop being so clumsy.”

Her mother’s face deflated. “You married a Nazi and he’s not even that important.”

“My mom says I’m important.” Oswald whined. He didn’t know what he did wrong. Her mother gave her daughter a disappointed look, and Hannelore blushed and turned away. Her parents then left without a word as Aigis, Hitler and Himmler came by the table. Aigis was the only one smiling.

“Look at the happy couple!” Aigis beamed. Hitler and Himmler were silent, the former looking more annoyed than anything. Himmler looked like he wanted to speak, but his words caught in his throat. He was too uncomfortable to even utter a greeting.

Hitler, on the other hand, opted to shake her hand.

“Herr Hitler! Oswald told me all about you. I-It is a pleasure to meet you, sir...” She stuttered, intimidated by his presence. Hitler returned the smile, but his neck was contorted as if he had to battle the urge not to throw up.

“You must be a very lucky woman to link up with THE Oswald Volkmann.” He complimented. Hannelore giggled. The Führer seemed much less intimidating now that she met him. She always imagined him as this big, imposing, frightening figure. He was, well, just a regular man.

“I hope things are going well for the National German Workers Party—”

“National SOCIALIST German Workers Party.” Hitler snapped. It was a gentle correction, but he paused the handshake and peered into her eyes. His amiable persona broke down, revealing a much harsher, colder demeanor. His smile vanished and his grip tightened. Hannelore winced, feeling him digging his fingernails into her skin.

“...Right. My apologies.” Hannelore squeaked. He shook her hand again, and the smile returned.

“No worries. It was an honest mistake.” He dismissed. Aigis, Oswald and Hannelore had been dragged back down to reality by their ankles. Himmler was the only one who remained unaffected by his demeanor. As the handshake ended, Hannelore held her hand with her free one, trying to rub some life back into it. Himmler stepped up to the table and placed a small wooden box on it.

“A wedding gift.” He presented, gesturing toward the box. Hannelore brought the box closer to herself. It was fairly light. She slowly opened the lid to the box.

“Aww, thank you. You shouldn’t ha—” Her gratitude was interrupted by an awful smell. The smell made her throat close as bile threatened to force itself up. A dead mouse was in the box, along with a few dead flies. The body had long since started decomposing, and the smell was horrendous. Hitler covered his mouth to hide the grin forming on his lips. Aigis simply stared at the scene from a distance, not feeling any particular way. Oswald peered inside of the box and began curiously poking.

“Woah. How come dead things are so squishy and soft when they're fresh, but hard as a rock when they're all rotten like this?”

Himmler leaned over to peek inside the box. “Oh, my mistake. I must’ve forgotten to poke air holes in the box before I put the rodent inside. My apologies.”

This made Hitler have to suppress his laughter even harder. He couldn't contain his giggles, and had to pretend to cough. Hannelore noticed the microscopic grin forming under Himmler's thin mustache. She had to fight the urge to fling the dead rodent at his stupid, nerdy face. The newlywed bride visibly shook as she tried her hardest not to scream.

"Are you okay, Hannelore? You're shaking." Aigis pointed out. Hannelore shook her head slowly.

"Yeah. I'm just a bit chilly." Her voice left her throat listless and hoarse. Oswald looked up, pausing his inspection of the rat corpse.

"It's kinda warm in here, actually." He mentioned, somehow not getting what was going on. Himmler grabbed the shoulders of the hysterical Hitler and guided him away.

"I'm going to get him some water," He waved, trying to stifle his own giggles. "And congratulations to you two."

The two men hopped away like schoolboys, leaving the young couple and their friend alone at the table. Aigis adjusted her tie and shoulder belt on her SA uniform.

"I'm heading back to the apartment, Oswald," She sighed, the thick tension of the whole ordeal wearing her thin. "You two had fun."

The rest of the wedding reception between Oswald and Hannelore was spent in silence. Oswald hyperfixated on his new dead mouse. Hannelore, on the other hand, had her gaze locked onto the box. She wanted to smash it into the wall. She wanted to grab her husband and leave this church. Leave this city. Leave this godforsaken country.