

— *April 15th, 1917. Schumacher Backyard, 12:40 P.M.* —

With Vergil gone, Aigis was no longer obligated to train long hours every day. Aigis still kept in touch with her training periodically throughout the years, she spent most of her newly freed-up schedule spending time with Frieda and Irma. But seeing the Golden Battalion return to Ruheplatz guilt free disturbed Aigis. She felt a bitter taste in her mouth looking at the gold-headed tyrants. After she borrowed the map from Wessels, she went straight into the backyard. For a couple of hours every day, she unleashed all of her offensive abilities against a line of wooden dummies she made herself with old plywood, sticks, and bound together with old rope.

She had three dummies in a horizontal line. She had been trying for the past week to unlock the red nuclear energy that snapped her father's leg. She remembered the rush that eased her rage as she overwhelmed Vergil in her assault. The red energy seemed to give her an edge she needed.

She stood tall in front of the first wooden dummy. She took a deep breath and concentrated all of the *Aurae* in her body and redirected it to her arms. Her arms gradually rose to the heat of underground magma and turned fiery red. She could feel the power building up inside of her, ready to be unleashed. With one swift motion, a sky-blue bolt of energy fired from her hand. An explosion the size of a basketball burst from the chest of the wooden dummy, knocking it down. The entire middle of the dummy was now a gaping hole.

"Not good enough." She complained. She needed an attack so strong that the entire dummy would be destroyed in one fell swoop. She turned to the next wooden dummy and charged it up again. The same blue energy bolt fired from her arms, blasting the dummy down. The dummy exploded again, but this time it only took out a large chunk from the left side. Aigis

cursed to herself, stomping on the grass. She'd been at this for almost an entire week, yet she's barely made any progress.

The last dummy remained pristine, rocking only slightly in the wind. This next one had to be it. The one last piece to the puzzle. She took one deep breath, letting millions of Air and auras particles enter her body and expand her lungs. She focused all of her Auras into her arms again, and they glowed hot red like the sun. This time, memories of Otto, bonding with the schoolchildren, the old life they used to have. She imagined hundreds of slow, painful deaths of the Golden Battalion soldiers who robbed her of that life. It wasn't just her arms, her entire being boiled with red-hot hatred. With the weight of pushing a large boulder, she threw only the slightest movement and let out the largest blast of her life. The blue bolt flew so quickly that it became a thin, long beam of light. A cloud of mist puffed up from the impact. Aegis swatted blindly at the mist, trying to clear the air. When it finally cleared, her eyes opened wide in disbelief. She did even less damage to it than the first two dummies. The dummy still had its head and the left half of its body.

"What the hell?!" She shrieked to no one in particular. She stomped around the yard, dove into the ground and rolled around kicking and screaming. She didn't care who saw her acting like an overgrown toddler. A few minutes passed and the red faced 17-year-old finally grew too tired to keep yelling. She picked herself up and brushed all of the grass off of her clothes, mumbling swears. Then she stopped. A sizzling sound came from the dummy. Aegis edged closer to it. The wood on the dummy was corroding slowly, but more and more of it disintegrated. Aegis' finger kissed it, and the whole thing collapsed in on itself. It seemed that the weaker the blast, the more poisonous or corrosive the aftermath. Perfect for an ambush.