

— *July 15th, 1925. Frieda's Cottage, Magierhain, 5:00 P.M.* —

Frieda returned to Magierhain with Hilda in tow. It was difficult to get the young child to behave during the almost four hour car ride, so Frieda was quite relieved to arrive. The child would not sleep in the car and she had a devil of a time trying to keep her occupied and quiet. Hilda was in a mood and refused to do as she was told, so Frieda had given her a few crackers to eat. Now the little girl was covered in crumbs and making a mess in the back seat. Gerhard didn't complain too much, as he was more than willing to clean up the back seat of his car.

Frieda opened the front door to her cottage. The residential buildings in Magierhain didn't have locks, as the Psychokinetic community held enough faith in each other that they did not need them. Frieda was quite glad for that, as she did not want to bother with a key. She did not expect to come home with an 8-year-old, so there was nothing that she needed to hide.

The child stepped in through the doorway and looked around, curious.

"Where are the toys?" She snapped, looking around the room.

Frieda was a bit taken aback by her bluntness. "I don't have any."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm a grown-up."

Hilda was not happy with that response, and started to pout.

"That's such a grandma thing to say." Hilda chided. She already knew that comments about Frieda's age got under her skin, despite the woman only being in her mid-20s.

Frieda was about to snap back, but caught herself before she could. She took a deep breath, and calmed herself. There was no way that she could get angry with a little girl.

"So, I asked Gerhard to bring you a bed. You can sleep across from me."

Hilda was not listening. She ran over to a vase and used psychokinesis to pick up. Frieda ran over to her, letting her hair get into her eye.

“Hey, put that down! It’s not a toy!” Frieda shouted. Hilda simply juggled it, giggling hysterically to herself.

“I said give it!”

Frieda reached for it, but Hilda ran away from her, still hogging it.

“Gimme a toy then!”

The two chased each other around the small cottage for a few minutes, with the little girl laughing at the top of her lungs. Frieda was not built for this exercise. Not in ballet flats, not in this heavy summer dress. But Hilda had no trouble getting away from her. She was small and nimble. She ducked and dove between Frieda's legs. Frieda couldn't keep up with her, no matter what she did. Frieda stopped running, and gave up, panting heavily. She leaned against a table to catch her breath. She was starting to get a headache. Something had to be done.

“A potato, please.” Frieda asked the produce vendor in her residential area. She spoke with a listless drone, with no energy to put on her voice. Hilda was running around her in circles. Her behavior had not improved since last night. She was loud, and obnoxious, and Frieda had to repeat herself five or six times before the girl would listen to her. And once she had her attention, she was just as bad.

“You want a *singular* potato?” The produce vendor questioned, a bit confused. Frieda sighed, and held her forehead.

“Please, just give it to me.”

The man handed her the potato, and Frieda gave him a few pfennig. Still staring into the void, she handed Hilda the potato. Hilda inspected it like it was a foreign object.

“The heck is this?”

“A potato.”

“What am I supposed to do with it?”

“Play with it.”

Hilda’s face contorted. “I’m not gonna play with a potato. That’s stupid.”

“PLAY WITH IT!”

Hilda was taken aback. Frieda had not raised her voice at all, and now that she had, it had gotten Hilda’s attention. This didn’t bother the child. She simply made do with the potato as a makeshift toy. She ran off, leaving Frieda with the produce vendor?

“Need a hug, fraulein?”

Frieda leaned into the arms of the produce vendor.

“Take all the time you need.”