

— *July 2nd, 1934. Magierhain, 8:50 A.M.* —

What a wonderful thing to wake up to. A soggy, wet towel settling on top of the wooden floor. Now the wood was going to settle quicker. Frieda, her hair still down and still donning her sleepwear, towered over the sopping, wet pile of cloth in front of her. She was NOT in the mood today.

“I’m getting too old for this.” She grumbled. Frieda had just turned 34 about three months prior. Between taking care of the surly Hilda and helping build Magierhain into the community it was, now sitting at a total population of about 7000 Psychokinetics, all of her tasks made Frieda feel even older than she was. With both hands, she grasped the towel and walked away with it. As she strolled down the two-bedroom apartment, she glanced inside of Hilda’s room. The now-16 year old was filing her nails as per usual. Since she was older, her eyebrows shrunk a little, but not enough to get rid of her perpetual scowl.

Hilda noticed her angry guardian looking up at her. “What’re you mad about?”

Frieda heaved the towel and flung it onto Hilda’s bed. Hilda shifted to her left with a disgusted look on her face.

“How many times do I have to tell you to NOT leave your wet towels on the floor?!”

“I move them eventually.” Hilda shrugged.

“The floor is wood, it can’t get wet or else it’ll warp! Besides, I don’t want to step in your body funk!”

Hilda tossed her file onto the nightstand and laid on her back. “Jeez. You’re not my mom, *mom!*”

Frieda rolled her eyes. Around the time Hilda turned 10 or so, she began calling Frieda mom. Frieda felt weird about it, as it reminded her of how old she truly was, but Hilda seemed to

take comfort in that, so she didn't make an issue of it. Hilda's behavioral issues actually had improved somewhat. Before, she used to do something daily that pissed off the poor German woman. Now it was more like one or two incidents a week.

Frieda blinked twice before searching the room again. "Hang on. Shouldn't you be at school?"

"Frau Heinrich dismissed us early."

"It hasn't even been an hour yet." Frieda commented. Hilda sat up to where her back was on her headboard.

"Yeah, she began class, dropped a bunch of stuff, tripped a couple of times, and then shouted that class was over with a big smile on her face. Honestly, it was kinda creepy."

"We should check on her."

"No way! You're gonna try to convince her to restart class!" Hilda protested.

"I would NEVER do that! I'm the cool mom!" Frieda smiled.

Hilda crossed her arms. The angry-looking teen looked up at her mom. "Then why would we show back up on my day off?"

Frieda shrugged. "Make sure everything's okay."

Hilda acquiesced to her decision and walked with Frieda to the Academy. The duo had a few more minor interactions between them, but nothing worth mentioning. About ten minutes after leaving the apartment, they arrived. When they entered, they saw Ingrid working at her desk. She was unusually happy, smiling and humming while stacking papers. Frieda stepped up to her desk, Hilda dragging behind.

"Oh, hello Hilda," She greeted. "You came back to see me?"

“Yeah, because SHE made me.” Hilda pointed. Ingrid laughed. She was still stacking papers, her hands moving rapidly. Her eyes were darting around all over the place, which Frieda found unusual.

“Ingrid, I just wanted to come check on you.”

“Why would you be worried?” Ingrid questioned.

“This is the first time you’ve canceled class since the stomach bug outbreak of ‘25. Are you alright?”

Ingrid slammed her palms against the desk, making Frieda jump a little. “I’m perfectly fine! I appreciate the visit, but you’re worrying over nothing.” She snickered. Frieda felt a little bit of bile rise in her throat. She was clearly batty. Hilda subtly leaned over into Frieda’s ear.

“I think she’s been hitting the happy juice a little too hard.” Hilda speculated.

“She hasn’t been drinking. You’d be able to smell the alcohol on her.”

“Whatever it’s on, it’s probably not legal.” Hilda added. Frieda scoffed at her adoptive daughter, and took another step closer to the oddly-acting educator. Ingrid simply waltzed over to the window. Frieda looked over at the desk and noticed a sealed envelope that had been opened on her desk. The seal was the Reichsadler eagle. The Nazis had replaced the black Holy Roman eagle with their own eagle carrying a swastika wreath in its talons. It had been dated yesterday July 1st. Frieda opened the letter and read its contents.

“Frau Ingrid Heinrich, it is with a heavy heart that we report that your husband, Herr Dieter Heinrich, was found dead in the Reichstag building early with a gunshot wound to his left temple.”

Frieda looked up from the letter to look at Ingrid. She noticed her nails were scratching up the wooden windowsill. Ingrid finally turned to face the woman. Her face had contorted to

one of indescribable grief. Frieda knew what was wrong now. Without a word, she opened her arms up for an embrace and walked right over to Ingrid and hugged her tightly. She sank into Frieda's bosom, letting out a loud, shaky sob. Hilda kept her distance, but did gaze in concern at her teacher. A part of her felt horrible for her selfish attitude. Frieda rubbed her back gently to soothe her. Ingrid whimpered while she cried.