

— *December 26th, 1917. House Basement, 12:50 A.M.* —

Aigis waited until the whole house fell completely silent. She hid under her covers until Frieda had fallen asleep, then grabbed a lantern to help guide her through the dark house. She took her boots off and snuck around barefoot in order to keep as quiet as possible. She made it to Irma's room and creaked the door open. Oswald and Irma slept in the same bed. He slept on his back while Irma slept on top of him with her head resting on his chest. She ignored them and crept over to Oswald's side of the bed and slowly opened the drawer. Aigis rooted around the drawer, feeling around for the artifact. Then she pinched something cold. The copper key Vergil told her about. The key to the basement. She'd finally get to see what it looked like.

She made her way downstairs and found the door underneath the stairs. She took the key and wiggled it around in the keyhole until it clicked and opened. She grabbed the lantern and held it out, walking down the steps. The wood creaked loudly as she descended. Reaching the bottom, she held the lantern up, revealing the room. The whole basement was one big library, many different books adorning the shelves. All of them were about Psychokinetic history and their place in society over the course of the world's history. Aigis swiped her fingers though the titles of the books, searching for a good starting point. She found one titled, "The Origins and World History of the Psychokinetic Race: How Their Influence Shifted Over Time". It was a thick book about the width of her entire hand. It also had an uncomfortable weight to it. She waltzed over to a wooden chair and sat down in it. The book felt as if the weight would crush her lap and the wood groaned from the strain of carrying her. She opened the book and started reading.

In the beginning, the book mainly matched what her mother had read to her as a child. The Psychokinetics had ruled the world, being involved in almost every major civilization in the

ancient world. Ancient Egypt. Ancient China, Ancient Rome, Ancient Greece, Mesopotamia, the Aztec, the Mayans, the Inca, and so on and so forth. They influenced every major culture across the world, and their presence was felt all throughout history. She skipped ahead a few hundred pages, looking to see where things went wrong. She skimmed through the text until she found it. It began with a simple number.

1095.

1095 marked the beginning of the end for the Psychokinetic Race. It only began in Europe following the start of the Crusades. The factions in the war considered Psychokinetics to be a third party that the other side might use against them. So many of the nations involved would find Psychokinetic encampments and raid them. Soldiers on horseback would chop off the heads off all the men, women, and children they could find and hang the severed heads above their camps as a symbol of victory and triumph. And during the Black Death in Europe, many afflicted with the disease were paranoid and jealous of Psychokinetic healing abilities, and so they would often kill them in the streets in extrajudicial executions. Aigis could barely even imagine how many had died during that time period. That would be the first time in Psychokinetic history the population stagnated. A terrible omen for things to come.

The renaissance was what began the actual decline of the Psychokinetic population. The standardization of scientific thought in combination with the improvement of technology needed for daily life, many with already diluted bloodlines didn't feel the need to train years in the wilderness in complete social isolation, and so their bloodlines became thinner and thinner, some bloodlines dying out completely. It was the dawn of the new age, a new world.

Colonization and imperialization was what spread the decline in the European population to the rest of the world. Europeans had discovered that their technology could allow them to

colonize lands previously undiscovered and conquer the inhabitants, and so they did. Many of the native Psychokinetic population were either killed or forcefully converted to either christianity or to adopt a form of scientific thought. Some tried to resist, and would be met with force.

The final nail in the coffin for them was the industrial revolution. Auras was life energy created by the natural world. As cities were built and more of nature was cleared, psychokinetic populations had to move to more remote areas in order to find the ideal place to train and raise a family. At the end of the book was a footnote by the author.

*It was estimated that the world Psychokinetic population in the year 2000 BCE was about ten million people, roughly a third of the entire population at the time. By the writing of this book in the year 1910, it is estimated that the world Psychokinetic population has fallen to approximately nine million, less than 1% of the total world population. If these problems continue to persist, it is highly unlikely that they will survive to see the new millennium.*

Aigis didn't believe it. Immediately, she was rummaging through excuses in her mind to explain this phenomenon. It must be the author that was wrong, the Psychokinetics had to still be out there. They had to have all gone into hiding and came up with this elaborate plan to cover up their existence. She knew the Psychokinetics couldn't have possibly died out. She picked up and skimmed through the thousands of books that had collected dust on these shelves. But every book she read either didn't contradict the one she had read first, but some even outright confirmed it. Through her skimming, Aigis also read about the brutal ways throughout history in

which the Psychokinetics who didn't relocate their crops burned, their fields salted. Being forced into mass suicides in which hundreds or thousands of psychokinetics would throw themselves into the ocean or a volcano, unable to handle the cruelty they were forced to live through. These were the heroes Aegis looked up to as a kid. Holding onto the hope that one day, she would find the Promised Land, and that she could live a long life without pain finding where all the psychokinetics went. She would never see them in her lifetime. Books littered the floor as Aegis had to keep herself from collapsing. If this was the entire life's goal, then what was the point in living anymore? Vergil lied to Aegis her whole life, giving her a gap-toothed sinister grin while he did it. Out of everything he told her, this was the one thing Aegis wanted to actually be wrong. He wanted him to be a liar. Why'd this have to be the one thing he was actually telling the truth about?

“Damn it!” Aegis cursed, punching the shelf. “Damn you, Vergil!”