

— *August 15th, 1921. Reichstag Building, 9:00 A.M.* —

The Social Democratic Party of Germany held a meeting on this warm August morning. The political party was deciding on something to vote on, as they spent the entire previous meeting last Friday trying to handle the imminent hyperinflation threat that plagued Germany following the Treaty of Versailles. The party chairman, Hermann Müller, stood tall at the podium, trying to help the restless legislators come to an agreement. Dieter sat within the crowd in a docile manner. He was by far the youngest one in the building at 27, and his psychokinetic heritage made him look about 23. In fact, thanks to his baby face, every time he tried to enter the Reichstag, the guards made him take out his ID card, thinking he was too young to even be a legislator.

“Come on, people,” Müller pleaded in a way that made him sound like he still had a little bit of control left in him. He continued, saying, “We must agree to a certain rate to keep this economy from collapsing!”

A random bald legislator shot up from his seat. “The only hyperinflation going on here is with this issue!”

“Care to elaborate, Herr Wittmann?” Müller groaned.

“The papiermark is not going to crash, and the inflation we are experiencing right now will die down as long as we stop being so fussy about this subject!”

“Are you joking?!” Another legislator, this time a blonde man with glasses, bit back. He had one arm over the back of his chair and his legs crossed. “The exchange rate rose by about fifteen marks in only six months!”

“Where’s your proof, Herr Goeppert?”

Goeppert pulled out a document and straightened it on his table. “In January of this year, the exchange rate was around sixty German marks to one American dollar. Last month, it rose to seventy-five marks to one dollar.”

“That is barely anything! What about this is ‘hyperinflation’?”

“The rate rose that sharply in only HALF A YEAR!” Goeppert exclaimed. He pointed at the document he held and continued, saying, “This document was issued by the Bank of Berlin, and the figures were taken from the US government. This is no joke!”

“Then tell me, *money man*, how do you propose we deal with this ‘crisis’?”

Near the front, another legislator turned to look at the arguing men. He was a short man with dark brown hair.

“I propose we monitor our budget.”

“And allocate more money to other countries?! They’re the reason we’re in 130 billion marks in debt!”

“We agreed to their policy, we signed a treaty, it is our obligation that we both pay back those reparations and make sure the German citizens do not go broke in the process.”

“Why not just fiddle around with wages and prices for the time being?”

“Well, since we’re already printing money like it’s water, we might as well finish.”

“That doesn’t mean we just keep going like a bunch of neanderthals! We have more tools than just a money printer, we should use them!”

That was the last comprehensible thing to Dieter before the parliament committee erupted into a verbal melee, throwing insults and curses at each other like it was their last day to live. Germany’s insurmountable debt weighed on their backs as well, as the task of trying to save the country from going under was proving to be a herculean task. Even though inflation wasn’t too

horrible to the naked eye, if this problem wasn't fixed soon, the consequences would be catastrophic. Dieter shyly raised a hand. Müller pointed to the shy young man with his gavel.

"Yes, Heinrich, what is it?"

The disruptive brawl in the building died down as all other 101 legislators collectively stared at Dieter with their ears opened. They all looked like vultures, ready to tear into his suggestion. Dieter slowly lowered his hand, and looked down at his feet, then back up again, making sure he could be heard.

"Um, since we probably won't come to an agreement, why don't we vote on something else."

"Like what?" Goeppert asked. Dieter adjusted his dress shirt sleeve underneath his blazer.

"I've been thinking it over, and propose we pass the Psychokinetic Hate Crime Bill."

Nobody in the chambers said a word. Dieter could hear the shifting of paper, some rogue coughing, and the squeak of his own chair as he shifted in his seat. Their look softened in confusion.

Then, all of the legislators started to laugh. Dieter sat there with a blank stare as the laughter got louder and louder. They all seemed to be sharing the same joke. It took a whole minute for the cackling to die down, and Müller was the first to speak.

He leaned over the podium and asked, with a chuckle, "Heinrich, with all due respect, what the *hell* is that?"

Dieter cleared his throat and replied, trying not to sound so intimidated. "It is a bill, if passed, that will grant protections to Psychokinetic citizens in Germany."

"And tell me, Heinrich. What would be the end goal for this hypothetical law?" Wittman scoffed.

“Well, we can get the Psychokinetic population on our side, which means more votes for us—”

“Heinrich, most Germans don’t even care about that old religion. Except the ten conspiracy theorists who believe they actually have magical powers.”

“That’s probably why we lost the war so badly. The Kaiser would rather shoot down some religious monks rather than focus on the war effort.”

Müller continued, “You’re still pretty young, so I’m going to let you in on something. We serve the interests of the entire German populace. We’re going to lose favor with the public if we don’t tackle issues plaguing us nationally.”

“Yes, chairman.” Dieter closed his eyes and sank back into his seat. The rest of the party continued to debate on social welfare, workers’ rights and other issues. Dieter felt like he wasn’t even in the same room as these people.

— *Hours later* —

Ingrid stood outside the Reichstag building, holding a sign she drew herself that read, “You did it!” on it. She waited with bated breath, and Dieter exited the building with his suitcase and head hanging low.

“So? How’d it go?” Ingrid asked, her smile faltering. Dieter lifted his head, and the disappointment on his face said it all. A bit of his hair fell into his eye. He replied, with a sigh, and walked up to her, his shoulders slumping, looking like a kicked puppy.

“They laughed at me before I even had the chance.” He sighed. Ingrid opened up her arms.

“C’mere, engel.” Dieter gave a small smile and hugged Ingrid, squeezing her tight. She wrapped her arms around his torso, and patted his back. She whispered.

“Your time will come, honey. You just gotta have patience.”

She was a whole foot (about 30 and a half centimeters) shorter than him, and had to tiptoe in order to hold him. He replied.

“Yeah, I hope.”

She pulled away from him and held him by his forearms, smiling up at him.

“I vote we just have some lunch. That’ll cheer you up.”

Ingrid took Dieter by the hand, and they started walking, heading toward a restaurant down the road.