

— *December 21st, 1923. Encampment Cafeteria, 10:30 P.M.* —

Everyone in the encampment, whose population had increased to a total of about 200 psychokinetics in total. In the meantime, a town hall, a church, a clinic, an academy, and various other facilities had been built in the two years. Gerhard finally decided on a name for this safe haven of Psychokinetics: Magierhain. Things in this once small encampment were really starting to build into a full-fledged community.

Once again, it was the Festival of Reflection. All 200 residents of Magierhain were in the dining hall, enjoying their hot, winter meals. Everyone was laughing, telling anecdotes, and celebrating in the warmth of the cafeteria. Frieda always enjoyed all four festivals, but the Festival of Reflection was by far her favorite. The food, the atmosphere, the stories, and the people made for a truly enjoyable evening. The food was the best; there were mulled wines, roasted goose, and spiced bread pudding. The Festival of Reflection was the last major festival of the year, and with the weather turning colder, it was nice to enjoy the company and the food.

Frieda sat at the front table with the other major key figures of Magierhain management. Gerhard sat at the head of the table, Dieter and Ingrid sat across from her, but the seat to her right still remained vacant. Gerhard was sulking because Dieter was recounting a particularly embarrassing memory.

“So Gerhard and I were walking back to the university campus. It was late at night, and we were a bit intoxicated. We were passing through an alley, when suddenly Gerhard saw a cat sitting on top of a fence. He gets this evil look in his eye and tells me, ‘I’m gonna make that cat fall off that fence’.”

“Dieter, please.” Gerhard whined. Ingrid wasted no time silencing him by shushing him. She had her elbows on the table, and her head in her hands as she intently watched and listened

to the story. Dieter continued, his face getting a little redder from the laughter. Some tears stain his cheeks.

“So I try to tell him, ‘maybe you should lay off the booze’, but he insists. Gerhard starts walking over to the fence. The closer he gets, the more he focuses on the cat. So Gerhard reaches out with his PK and tries to push the cat off the fence. Suddenly, the cat goes flying, and rockets right at his face! It clawed at his face for at least 15 seconds. When it finally let go, he was left with those three long scars on his cheek.”

Frieda turned to Gerhard, mouth agape. “You told me those were battle scars!”

Gerhard buried his face in his own coat. “...I may have lied.”

“Technically, it’s still true,” Ingrid giggled. “It’s his scars from his battle with the cat!”

The entire table except for Gerhard roared with laughter. Gerhard simply groaned as everyone continued laughing at his expense. He turned to Dieter and muttered,

“...You have no idea how hard I worked to get that cat to like me. I ran across half of Germany just to find that cat food it liked so damn much. And it took me two weeks to finally pet it without getting my hand bitten off!”

Frieda patted him on the back harshly, in an attempt to mock him some more. “I knew you were just a big softie.”

Gerhard grumbled some more and went back to eating. His cheeks were bright red from embarrassment.

“Dieter seems a lot more... confident now, doesn’t he?” Frieda commented, taking a spoonful of soup.

“I’ve been doing a lot of thinking these past few years, and I came to a realization. It’s not the society that refuses to acknowledge Psychokinetics. I’ve just been approaching it the wrong way.”

Gerhard looked up from his plate, and stared intently. Frieda could tell he was interested as well. Dieter took a sip of his water before continuing.

“The main reason that no action is being done is because they don’t believe the psychokinetic population is a large enough voter base to influence legislation. So next time I’m up in Berlin, I’m going to sniff out citizens all over and get them over to our side. Even if I can get my fellow members in the SPD to acknowledge us, it would be a huge step forward.”

“I wish I could come with you.” Ingrid sighed. Dieter took his hand and squished her cheeks with it.

“I’m going to miss you as my campaign manager, but teaching the future generation of Psychokinetics is an equally important job.”

“Oh, stop. Teaching little kids magic is nothing compared to the freedom fighting you do. You get to travel and make a difference, while I sit in a stuffy classroom and lecture on the basics of PK and ethics. It just doesn’t compare. I envy your job.”

Dieter pecked his wife on the mouth, and she reciprocated. They continued their exchange, but Gerhard cut in and said,

“So who’s going to be the new campaign manager?”

“Well, Ingrid’s a teacher now, and you’re too busy running Magierhain, so…”

The whole table turned to the only other person who hadn’t been mentioned yet. Frieda’s eyes darted up. She extracted the spoon slowly from her mouth and placed it back on the table.

“Me?”

“Of course. You’re friendly, young, energetic, and a good conversationalist. I think you would be the perfect fit for the role, and I can think of no one better to help me achieve our goals.”

“What does this job entail?”

Dieter shrugged. “You go around the city and talk to other psychokinetics. That’s it.”

Frieda thought it over for a few moments. The idea was certainly tempting, especially since she didn't have anything else to do, really.

“I don’t see why not. Sure.”

Dieter clapped. “That’s what I like to hear.”