

— *March 3rd, 1926. Psychokinetic Children's Academy, 2:20 P.M.* —

“Alright children,” Ingrid stood tall in front of a class of fifteen psychokinetic children. They had multiple teachers, as Magierhain was growing in population. All of them stood in perfect rows and columns, standing at attention with their hands behind their backs. The kids that Ingrid taught were between 2nd and 4th grades, between the ages of 7 and 10. The children learned magic formally up until they turned 15. “Time to show your mamas and papas what you’ve learned.”

It was around dismissal time, so the parents of the children stood on the front wall. Frieda was in that mix, waiting to pick up Hilda. The children, in near-perfect synchronization, began to create puffs of fire from their fists. Ingrid, with a smug smirk, sat on a nearby table. The kids started by making their fires small and blue. Ingrid, however, had trained them to make their flames bigger. So, as they went through the motions, the fires grew and grew until the fire became red. The parents quietly clapped for all of their children.

“All of you did wonderful jobs! You all will become great one day!” Ingrid clapped as well for her students. “Your homework for tonight is studying the foundation of shield magic. And don’t forget to meditate. You must feel the *Aurae* flowing within you in order to know how to control it. Dismissed.”

All of the children filed out and went over to their parents, hugging them and chatting happily. Frieda, meanwhile, walked over to Ingrid, who was gathering her books and papers. She looked up, smiling.

“How’s Hilda been doing?” Frieda asked her friend.

“You know I love all my students equally, so I shouldn’t say this out loud,” Ingrid leaned closer to whisper to Frieda. “But out of all my students so far, I’ve never seen a child so

advanced in their magic ability as her. She was even creating small balls of lightning during a break in today's session. It was truly incredible to see her in action.”

Frieda felt relieved. “That’s good. Behaviorally, how is she?”

Ingrid’s face fell a little. “It depends on the day to be honest. For the most part, she can be quite shy and quiet. Other times, she can get quite feisty and rebellious.”

“It’s sort of the same at home. At least she’s gotten better since I took her in last year.”

“I’m impressed, though,” Ingrid leaned back on the desk. “A child so grief-stricken as her, and she seems to be handling it quite well. She is strong-willed, no doubt about that. You have a wonderful child on your hands.”

Frieda joined Ingrid in leaning on the wall. “I got a letter from my mother the other day.”

“You haven’t seen her in...?”

“8 years now.”

“How is Irma doing these days?”

Frieda exhaled through her nose, smiling. “She found a new home in Switzerland not too long after the fire. She seems really happy there.”

Ingrid raised an eyebrow. “So why bring this up?”

“The last time I wrote to her, I told her about how much Hilda worked my nerves. Wanna know what she told me? She said I did the exact same thing to her when I was little,” Frieda looked at the ceiling of the classroom. “Whenever my sister and I played hide-and-seek, I always chose the fireplace. She always got mad and dragged me out, covered in soot. Then I would go to her and hug her, covering her in it.”

Ingrid played with a necklace Dieter gave her for one of their wedding anniversaries.

“Any progress with finding Aigis?”

“I try to look for her when I run errands with Gerhard. Nothing.”

Frieda felt a hand touch her shoulder. “Never give up on her, Frieda. You’ll find each other eventually.”

Frieda grabbed the hand. Ingrid was a very caring person, which is why she was such a good teacher. She had a calming aura that made anyone around her feel secure. Her hand felt warm and comforting. She was glad Ingrid was one of the first people she met in Magierhain. They exchanged goodbyes and she went over to Hilda, who was drawing on the walls with her magic.

“I heard you did a good job today.”

“Not really,” Hilda continued her doodle. It was a poorly drawn unicorn. She tried though. “I just did my thing.”

“I think it’s time we get ice cream.” Frieda jabbed Hilda in the back with her elbow, causing Hilda to mess up her drawing.

Hilda spun around, looking at her. “You’re not just saying that to trick me into taking a bath, are you? I’m onto you, lady!”

“I’m being honest this time,” Frieda extended a hand. “Let’s get ice cream.”

Hilda put her tiny hand in Frieda’s. They left the academy, going to grab something sweet.