

— *December 29th, 1917. Basement, 8:35 A.M.* —

The basement was the only room in the house Frieda hadn't checked yet. Neither she, Oswald or Irma had seen Aigis in days. Oswald didn't want to intrude on the basement because he wanted to be a good houseguest. Irma, seeing how tired Aigis had looked, advised Frieda to give her sister some space, as she didn't look too well mentally. Frieda refused to listen. She just got Aigis back in her life, and she wasn't just going to sit idly by while she slipped through her fingers again. Creeping into the basement, she almost tripped on something. The entire floor drowned in books, turning it into a musty sea of pages. The wooden chair Aigis sat on was like an oasis, a small spot that wasn't littered with books.

"Aigis?"

Frieda had to repeat her name a few times until Aigis finally snapped out of her trance and noticed her sister.

"Aigis, how long have you been down here, we haven't seen you in days!"

Frieda tried her best to sound both concerned and annoyed at the same time. Aigis broke eye contact and continued to stare at the floor.

"What was it all for?" Aigis sounded broken and exhausted.

"Huh?" Frieda asked. Aigis stood up like a mummy. She gazed at the empty shelves where the books once sat.

"It's not real, Frieda." She droned, her voice static from being unused.

"What's not real?"

Aigis' dead eyes looked toward Frieda, although avoiding eye contact. "The Promised Land. It's been a lie this whole time. The Psychokinetics are dying out."

"What do you mean?"

“I’ve read all of them. He was telling the truth,” Aigis’ voice became faster as she took less breaths in between. “All of the history books I’ve read. They’re real. Everything in them. They’ve all happened. This world. It isn’t ours. It belongs to humans. We have no right to be here.”

“Hey, hey!” Frieda jumped over the books, trying not to trip and fall on the way. She grabbed Aigis and held her tight. She could feel her body shake, almost vibrate. She was breathing in quick bursts and was about to hyperventilate.

“I have no right to be alive.” Aigis mumbled. Frieda shook her body.

“Don’t say that! The Psychokinetic people are strong!”

Aigis forcefully shook Frieda off of her arm. “The humans are stronger. You haven’t heard about the horrible atrocities they committed to our race? Why do you think there are so few of us now? Killing us, stealing our homes, treating us like animals, and erasing our knowledge and history!”

Aigis went over to the chair she sat in and picked up her Gewehr 98 rifle. She grabbed it by the front, holding the gun like a baseball bat. Frieda backed away. Aigis was clearly unwell. Her sister, the most level headed, intelligent and mature person she knew, was reduced to a raving madwoman.

“Even my mother. Vergil only saw her as an heir dispenser. Used for her body. A tool. And he threw her away once she did her job. He did the same to you and Irma.”

“Wait, have you seen papa—”

Aigis swung at a candle stand that stood next to her chair. The glass covers shattered upon hitting the floor. A small fire started, but Aigis immediately stamped it out. She didn't even seem to care about the fire. It was like she was blinded to her own actions.

“All these years, I told myself that I could deal with the names. The harassment. The discrimination. That I could take it because the Promised Land was there. That one day, I could find where all the Psychokinetics went and live a *loooooong*, peaceful life free from pain and suffering.”

Aigis continued to swing at various objects across the basement library. The next objects were a line of books still on the shelf. In one clean motion, she swiped the bookshelf clean, sending the books flying. She then found the history book, the one that started it all. She stabbed the bayonet of the rifle deep into the book, and flung it to the other side of the basement. The book made a thud as it hit the wall and landed.

“WHAT WAS IT ALL FOR?!” Aigis shouted at the top of her lungs. The screech was so loud, you could hear her vocal chords ripping to shreds. The room was a disaster, with a broken bookshelf, broken glass, and piles of books and debris lying everywhere. Aigis stood there, shaking her head and breathing heavily. Her grip on the rifle was tight but shaky. Frieda’s knees locked tight, unsure of whether to get closer or to leave the basement.

“When was the last time you slept?”

Aigis paused for a moment. She tried to think, but her mind was too foggy and tired to focus on a single thought. She’d been in the basement so long. There were no clocks or windows, only candlelight. Aigis sighed, leaning onto the shelf. She ran her fingers through her hair.

“Do you need me to get you something?” Frieda asked her.

“Some tea would be nice.” Aigis requested in an exhausted tone. Frieda sheepishly nodded.

“Okay. I’ll get it for you.” She promised, leaving the young blonde girl alone in the messied basement.