

— *January 10th, 1918. Selkefall, 8:50 P.M.* —

In the wild, Lui found some potatoes, carrots and a few other edible plants, he put them on a pot hovering over a bonfire to boil. The night was cold, and the air smelled of snow. Frieda's fever had broken completely by now, so he was making the both of them some food to hopefully help with the lingering lethargy. Lui hummed, chopping up the potatoes and tossing them into the pot.

"Doesn't it look delicious?" He begged.

Frieda didn't glorify his bragging. A little offended, he turned around and gave a smirk.

"Hey, I didn't have to cook for you. I'm doing this out of the kindness of my own heart to help you get back to full health."

"That wouldn't be necessary if you never pushed me in that river in the first place!"

"In MY defense, most people don't get sick that easily from falling into water."

"It's SNOWING. I was in wet clothes and in the freezing cold. I'm lucky I didn't get hypothermia."

"Whatever. You're alive, and all of your body parts are functioning. What else do you want from me?"

Frieda snarled. She didn't spend an entire day walking across half of Germany to train in the wilderness just to be harassed by a teenage boy in a coon skin cap. Lui didn't need to hear a word to know how much in a surly mood she was in. He simply continued to cook his food. After about ten minutes, the food was done. He served it to her with a wooden spoon and a small wooden plate.

"Here's your food. You don't have to *thank* me or anything." He snarked. Frieda just flashed him a look of disgust before accepting the plate. She took her spoon and filled it with a

mesh of potatoes and carrots. She chomped on it with a rhythmic anger, looking Lui straight in the eye as she did, as some form of personal insult. But she had to admit, the food was actually not that bad. It actually tasted good. But she wasn't going to let him know that. He didn't deserve the satisfaction. Lui shrugged and grabbed his own plate. He sat down on the grass and began eating, plate on lap.

"Where did you get those?" Frieda questioned. Lui shrugged.

"I just got 'em." Lui shrugged.

"Was it from that cabin?"

Lui's eyes darted up at her. "Cabin?"

"There's a cabin not too far from here," Frieda explained. "I saw it while I was making my way up the river. It's kinda pretty, actually."

"I didn't see a cabin."

Frieda raised a very skeptical eyebrow. "It's the only structure in kilometers. It's kind of hard to miss."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Frieda pointed at Lui's plate and spoon. "Then where did you get the cutlery from?"

Lui's chewing slowed. He made one or two loud smacks before admitting, "I just found 'em lying around."

"In the wild?"

"Yep."

"Just, like, in the grass?"

"Bushes actually," Lui corrected, erecting one finger up straight at the sky. "If you're going to assume, get it right."

Frieda snorted. “Not bad for dirt food.”

“I used to cook for my family.”

“Where is your family?”

“Up to your imagination.” Lui resigned, taking a spoon and bringing it up to his mouth.

Frieda chuckled to herself before speaking.

“Hmm. I think they got fed up with all your dirt food and left you out in the wild.”

“Very funny, fraulein.” He scoffed. The two continued to eat in a very passive aggressive manner, their eyes staring at each other but never directly. They were both sitting on the ground, Frieda was propped up against a tree with the leaf blanket covering her legs, and Lui was seated on the grass with his legs crossed.

“What are you doing out here?” Lui asked. Frieda looked up at the night sky.

“Training.”

“I remember you saying something about that, but you never told me.”

“Because that’s all that’s important.”

Lui threw his hands up in offense. “If you don’t wanna talk about it, then tell me. No need to get all sensitive about it.”

Frieda simply exhaled through her nose in a huff. Glancing off to the side, she said after about ten seconds, “My sister.”

“Your sister sent you out to train in nature like a monk?”

“I have to save her. And I don’t have much time.”

“Is she in a lion’s den? Gonna get eaten alive if you don’t do anything about it?”

Frieda didn’t answer. She simply dipped a finger into the dirt and started drawing various lazy shapes.

“Is that all you’re planning on telling me?”

“Pretty much.”

Lui sucked on his teeth, offended. He bothered not to say anything more on the subject.

Frieda decided to lay back down and pulled the blanket over herself, preparing to go to sleep.

“Hey Lui?” She asked.

“Yeah?”

“Your food was *okay*.”

Lui nodded with a slight smile. “I get the feeling you’re going to upgrade that to ‘pretty good’ soon.”

“Maybe,” Frieda curtly admitted. “But you haven’t earned that honor yet.”

Lui’s face deflated. “Good night, Frieda.”