

— *November 14th, 1918. Munich, 8:00 A.M.* —

Aigis embraced her role as the Golden Battalion's puppet fully upon leaving Ruheplatz and finding her new purpose in life. Instead of teaming up with Oswald and finding ways to dodge her duty, she ratted out every single Psychokinetic they asked her to. Oswald was confused at first as to why Aigis had changed so drastically, but she told him not to worry about it, and the young man simply nodded and didn't press any further into the issue. She didn't feel the same dread as she did before having to turn over her own people. Now she does it with a solemn dutifulness, knowing that this loss of life is merciful compared to whatever horrific fate awaited them had Aigis not intervened.

Aigis and Oswald arrived one chilly, November morning to an office the Battalion had in Munich. Rifles on their back, they both filed into the office. When they entered, they saw Kollner packing up his things in the office. He had an open suitcase, and neatly packed various documents, his uniform, and personal effects within.

"Sergeant?" Aigis asked. The mustached-man looked up at her. He was a different type of calm this morning. He wasn't his usual stern yet exhausted calm that always bore wrinkles in his head. He seemed to be at peace.

"Schumacher, Volkmann. What are you two doing here?"

"Reporting for duty..." Aigis asked. Oswald pointed to his suitcase.

"Are we going somewhere?" Oswald asked.

"I'm going home. You should too." Kollner impatiently responded, closing his suitcase.

"Why?"

The disgruntled officer looked up at them. "You two seriously still haven't heard the news yet?"

Aigis furrowed her brow. “What news?”

Kollner sighed, as if it was a chore to even disclose this common knowledge. “The Great War is over. Germany signed an armistice three days ago.”

Aigis stepped forward. “But we don’t fight on the front lines. We shouldn’t be impacted.”

“Doesn’t matter, Schumacher,” Kollner explained, putting his jacket on. His tone was one of impatience and aggravation, as if he was explaining to a small child the color of the sky. He began buttoning up his coat. “The Battalion is still a part of the Imperial army.”

“What about the Psychokinetic threat? Doesn’t it still threaten the empire?” At this point, Aigis was throwing buzzwords at him to try to get him to give more information.

“The Kaiser gave up his throne and escaped to Holland. The German people decided that they’d prefer a democracy, and the Psychokinetic Sedition Act was repealed pretty much the moment that armistice was signed. As such, we were all disbanded.” Kollner picked up his suitcase and looked at the two.

“Truth be told, I’ve been waiting for this godforsaken war to end. I got sick of having to walk across the whole country on foot. It’ll be nice getting to finally settle down for once.”

Kollner began to leave the office. “Don’t worry about returning the guns. You can keep them.”

Aigis called out to him one last time. “What about us?”

“You’re both free to go. What you do from here is none of my business,” He replied, not looking back. He took his hat off and waved to them. “Take care of yourselves.”

Aigis didn’t know what to do next. The war is over and the attempted genocide of Psychokinetics was now over. She could go back to Frieda and try to rebuild their relationship. So why did it feel like she didn’t really... win? Even though in bigger cities, Psychokinetic

hatred wasn't very widespread, there had to be smaller towns and villages like Ruheplatz that would still be indoctrinated by the propaganda. Mob violence had to still be going on there. There was no guarantee that Aigis would be able to protect them from pain and suffering. That idea continued to crawl in the back of her mind and the inside of her skin. The Battalion's disbanding took away any potential power she may have had.

"This is great!" Oswald cheered, patting Aigis on the back. "Aren't you happy?"

"Ecstatic." Aigis deadpanned. Oswald looked at Aigis, his eyes sparkling with glee. He was so eager, so innocent, and so ignorant of the truth. She didn't want to burden this man with her own internal dilemma. Aigis and Oswald left the office building and strolled through the streets of Munich. Everyone around them weightlessly went about their lives, the fears of war now behind them. People were chatting with each other, eating, and enjoying themselves in cafes and bars. They walked for about two minutes before Aigis suddenly stopped. She turned around. Oswald was still behind her, still with that goofy smile he always had.

"What're you still doing here?" Aigis demanded in a low voice.

"Following you." He sheepishly responded, getting the feeling that he wasn't necessarily wanted right now.

"You have a family, Oswald. You should go back to them."

Oswald kicked the toe of his boot into the sidewalk. "We lost the war. They'll find a way to blame it on me."

"I'm sure they really do miss you."

"They probably do. But their pride comes before me. I'm better off without them." He sighed.

Aigis' expression softened. She pointed with her head, giving Oswald permission to come with her. Oswald beamed, getting to stick with his year-long friend. Aigis was almost jealous of his ability to form attachments so easily. The two wandered through the city, unsure of where to go next. After a while, they found a random street.

"This looks like a nice place." Aigis chirped, taking off her weapons and laying them down gently on the ground.

"For what?"

"Our new home." She said simply.

"But... it's stinky." He whined.

"Beggars can't be choosers, Oswald." She sprawled out her legs as she leaned her back against the brick wall of a factory. She patted the sidewalk next to her, inviting Oswald to sit next to her. After setting down his rifle, he did so.

"So..." He droned, tapping his finger on his knee. "What is your plan?"

"Save up some money for a few train tickets. I'm going back to Frieda."

"Why can't we just go back to Ruheplatz?"

Aigis looked the man dead in his eye. "I burned the house down, remember?"

"Oh..." Oswald sighed. The two were silent for a few seconds. The sound of people chatting, car engines, and birds filled the air. He spoke up again, "So I guess that puts an end to the whole 'burning psychokinetic knowledge' mission?"

"Not like I have a choice. The Battalion was my only means of doing so," She sighed, resting her chin between her knees. "Maybe this is a wake up call for me."

"Is it really life if you don't learn through your mistakes?" Oswald offers. Aigis saw a pebble on the sidewalk. She flicked it into the street.

“Again, Oswald. You really don’t have to do this. You can go to your parents’ place anytime you want—”

“And leave you out here on the street by yourself?” Oswald countered her argument. “I can at least help you get off the street and see your sister again.”

Aigis smiled widely. She elbowed him. “Thanks, Oswald. You’re a better friend than I deserve.”