

— *July 17th, 1933. Outside the Reichstag, 3:00 P.M.* —

Dieter, Ingrid, and a group of about a hundred supporters marched over to the Reichstag. They never planned on doing anything. That was the point. In a few of the major cities, Dieter deployed groups of peaceful protestors to public areas to prove to Hitler that they weren't going to submit to the intentionally vague rhetoric surrounding the sudden crackdown on pro-PK laws.

"You're definitely one of the bravest men I've ever met." Ingrid complimented her husband, who was gallantly marching in front.

"We have to fight, Ingrid. This isn't just about us, but our future children and grandchildren. We can't think about our future until we secure theirs."

"You've come a long way from the timid, shy botany student I met all those years ago. So scared of conflict, getting on your knees for anybody—"

"Ingrid..."

"I thought it was cute!" She said defensively.

"I couldn't look DJ in the eyes knowing I failed to stand up to a rising fascist state. If I'm going to go home to him, I have to come back knowing I at least tried to do something about it."

Ingrid gave him a supportive peck on the cheek as they approached the steps to the building. The crowd jumped a little upon what they saw there. In front of the steps, a couple of black-uniformed Honor Guards were standing at attention, their guns pointed straight ahead. They were blocking the entrance. On each row of the steps, a line of Schutzpolizei (Protection Police) were standing by. They didn't have their guns drawn, but all of them held their nightsticks out and ready.

"Halt!" The captain of the Schutzpolizei squad yelled at the crowd. He held up his hand, and his men held their clubs up. "You are trespassing on government property! Leave at once!"

“Looks like they saw us coming.” Ingrid whispered to her husband. Dieter stepped forward.

“We have not come to harm anyone nor to break any laws. We would only like to have a word with the Reich Chancellor.”

“Chancellor Hitler is a very busy man, and does not make a habit of granting audiences to misguided idiots!”

“If you say so,” Dieter shrugged. “But if you want to make this easier on all of us, then I suggest you go bring him out here.”

“This is a waste of his time.” The police captain groaned. His men looked just as annoyed.

“You leave negotiations to me.”

The captain wanted to rub off the smug smirk of Dieter’s face. He just wanted to sic his men on the people and get it over with, but he also knew any drastic measures of violence might alienate the general public. Especially against an unarmed group of protesters. So the commander acquiesced and instructed his men to hold their positions as he went inside. A couple of minutes passed, and an SS adjutant stepped out. She stood next to the police captain on the top step. Dieter could sense who she was. The same girl who had the SA interrupt a campaign of his a few years ago. Aigis.

“Seems like you got a pretty good promotion since the last time we saw each other.”

Aigis put a hand on her hip, above where her Luger Pistol holster rested on her right hip. “What do you want?”

“I thought I asked for the Chancellor.”

“He sent me to deliver the message. Whatever you need to tell him, you can say to me and I can take it back to him for you. It will be up to him if he chooses to hear you out or not.

Dieter took a deep breath. Hitler had reached the point where he got sick of talking to Dieter directly, so he’d rather have his lackeys do the talking for him. Either way, he had to make do with his situation.

“What we want is very simple. We want reassurance that the German Psychokinetic population will continue to live free and safely as we have under the Weimar Republic.”

Aigis readjusted her cap. She tried her best to keep a strong stoic face, but she noticed her left hand grip the railing a little tighter.

“You are worrying about nothing. There is nothing Chancellor Hitler or the NSDAP has done against the PKs.” Aigis stated in a professional tone, with a twinge of anger just below the surface.

“If that’s the case, then why did Hitler go out of his way to personally repeal every pro-PK law created between 1924 and 1933?” Dieter angrily retorted.

“We had to prioritize—”

“‘Prioritize the economy’. Like I haven’t heard that one before,” He chuckled before pulling out some documents. “I did some research, and I found that the economic cost of those laws were minimal. So minimal, in fact, that it actually took more effort to get rid of these laws than to leave them as they were. So it doesn’t make sense why he would repeal those laws.”

Dieter’s case was sharply interrupted by an uncaring yawn from Aigis. She gave him a half-lidded frown.

“Alright, let’s cut to the chase. None of you are allowed to be here.”

“Apparently. And?” Ingrid rudely remarked. Aegis raised a hand as if she was about to snap.

“All I have to do is give the Honor Guard and the Schutzpolizei the signal, and all of them will remove you. With force.”

Dieter wagged a finger confidently. “I don’t think you want to do that.”

The brim of her black leather cap cast a dark shadow over Aegis’ piercing blue eyes. Her body didn’t budge an inch.

He adjusted his suit and tie. “Imagine if the Nazi Party used force against a group of peaceful protestors on Reichstag grounds. Protestors, led by a former representative, who have done absolutely nothing wrong. It wouldn’t be a good look to the normal citizens of Germany. It will have consequences. Horrible ones.”

Aegis sneered at the group. What irked her the most was the way Dieter stared her down. He was nothing more than a wad of gum stuck to her boot. A wad of gum that needed to be scraped against the sultry July sidewalk to melt under the boiling sun.

“Not a bad theory,” She relented. “There’s just one tiny problem with your rhetoric: Your protests are disrupting the lives of regular German citizens going about their day.”

Dieter, Ingrid, and everyone in the crowd became silent. Many of the regular humans in the crowd shifted uncomfortably.

“It’s a necessary step in the fight for justice. The citizens saw that we deserved rights and fought proudly alongside us years ago—”

“That may have been the case under the Republic. But right now, all the citizens want is to put food on their tables. To care for themselves. Their families. Their right to daily luxury is being disrupted by protestors. Peaceful or not, that’s irritating. And some of your demonstrations

have already begun to become violent. That sounds like the perfect justification for using force to me.”

Dieter’s posture faltered slightly. It was a subtle hunch and dropping of the shoulders, but Ingrid could see it.

“And another thing. You claim that Chancellor Hitler took this country by force. That he waltzed his way in, violently uprooted the country and made himself dictator. But you forgot it’s the people who voted for him and the Nazi Party. They rightfully trusted him to fix Germany and get the country on track again. So they’re not the easily-corrupted fools you think they are. They’re people with lives who aren’t afraid to get rid of you if you get in their way.”

Hearing those words was... sobering to Dieter. Everyone in the crowd growled. They readied their signs and other objects to rally up the cause. Dieter, the leader, instead sunk into the crowd.

“So while our police friends in the other cities deal with those protestors, I’ll be nice and ask one more time. Leave before things get bloody.”

“We’ll never surrender to you, fasci—” Ingrid screamed at Aigis, raising a fist at her. A gentle hand came down upon her wrist, and the angered woman found herself staring into her husband’s serene eyes. They weren’t the eyes of a man who was momentarily kicked down. They were the unsaturated eyes of a man who had been truly defeated from all fronts. Dieter raised his other hand.

“I will see to it that everyone peacefully withdraws. All across Germany.” The look on everyone else’s faces spoke volumes of their exasperation. Even as their will crumbled, they could always look to Dieter to steady their resolve. That wasn’t the case this time. This was not the Dieter they had come to know. And it pained the man greatly to have let his wife and

everyone down. Dieter could barely make eye contact with Ingrid. Without a word, he crawled back to the train station with his followers curiously herding around him like livestock. He trudged on two feet like a sad, three-legged dog crawling for home. His head dragged along the gaudy city streets of Berlin, barely looking up to notice the bright blue sky.

“What happened to putting up a fight?” Ingrid whimpered in response.

“We tried. And that’s all that mattered.”

Aigis proudly looked to the Schutzpolizei captain and smirked victoriously. “Crisis averted.”

“Here I thought we’d start a bloody mess.” He casually replied.

“Don’t worry. The Chancellor will pay you well for your actions today. You’re dismissed.”

The Schutzpolizei captain saluted Aigis and prompted his men to follow him away from the Reichstag building. She gestured to the Honor Guard soldiers.

“You two. I’ll be sure to inform the Chancellor of your exemplary work holding off those failed insurrectionists.”

The guards nodded at her and obediently returned to their positions. Aigis folded her hands behind her back and took a deep breath, taking in the fresh summer air. She had a good feeling the Psychokinetic community now knew their place in Germany. Was her cursed heritage finally on track to be buried and forgotten? Had her 15-year-long mission finally come to fruition? For now, she decided to revel in her victory by going into the city to get herself some delicious linzer cookies.