

— *December 21st, 1921. The Psychokinetic Encampment, 4:00 P.M.* —

Snow began to fall on the grass and paved dirt roads of the settlement, as if someone had turned a giant salt shaker over the valley. Thankfully, the carpenters Gerhard recruited managed to replace the drafty tends with small wooden cottages. They were still uncomfortably cold to sleep in, but it provided better protection against the elements, at least. Frieda felt more at home now that she had an actual bed to sleep in from now on. She bought a new coat during her last trip to Chemnitz, a knee-length brown number that fit her nicely. The weather outside was already so frigid that she was wearing a pair of thick, wooly socks underneath her boots.

Because of the Winter Solstice, the sun was already beginning to set in the late afternoon, fixing to get completely dark by 4:30. The size of the encampment over the past eight months Frieda was a part of it increased by about an extra seven people. The four carpenters, and three recent university graduates who were more than willing to join the encampment for free room and board, made it all the more livable. It wasn't a massive increase in population, but the few extra people made the place feel a little more lively.

Frieda went out into the snow, away from the encampment. She had no particular reason other than warming up, waiting for the fire in her cottage to warm up the place. Her boots sunk a few centimeters into the powdery, white snow, and she left a trail of footprints behind her. She stopped. From the distance, she saw some faint lights coming from the ground. She walked towards the light.

Frieda came to a stop once she reached the light source, or rather, light *sources*. A big ring of candles were planted on the ground. And in the center sat Gerhard, Ingrid, and all of the other settlers. Dieter was the only one standing up, as he had his eyes closed and held up his own candle.

“In winter’s dark, light up our path. Through the thick hopelessness and fear, shine on the warmth within us, so that we may not forget hope and love, even on the coldest night of the year. May the light within each of us burn brightly, and guide us through the darkest nights ahead. Let not this long night throw us into despair, let not the dark of the world blind us from the light within, but instead, let it illuminate our souls.”

Frieda looked down at the crowd. They all had their hands laced together, and held candles. Their eyes were closed and their heads were lowered, and their bodies rocked slightly in rhythmic unison. She had never seen something like this before.

“That’s the Festival of Reflection.” A familiar voice said in her head. Frieda whipped her head next to her and saw Lui casually standing next to her. Frieda almost shrieked, but managed to stifle the sound.

“Stop doing that to me!” She whispered angrily.

“You know just because I’m *physically* not here with you doesn’t mean I don’t know what you’re thinking, right?”

“So ghosts have mind-reading powers?”

“We’re more like spectators. We just watch from the Lifestream and choose when to show up.”

Frieda looked back at this Festival of Reflection. “Festival...?”

“An Ancient Psychokinetic holiday. You... never celebrated it?”

“Nope. I didn’t even know we had holidays.”

Lui pinched the bridge of his nose. “The more I learn about your family, the more I start to realize how much of a screw-up your father was.”

“You called it the...?”

“Festival of reflection. There are four festivals in a year, each representing the four seasons. They all share rituals, yet each have their own unique flair to them. It’s quite a beautiful ceremony.”

“Do you think they’ll let me join in?”

Lui shrugged. “I don’t see why not.”

Frieda walked up to the crowd, who were still holding their candles and chanting softly. Gerhard and Ingrid looked up and saw Frieda. Dieter paused his chanting.

“Oh, Frieda. You’re just in time for the winter meditation.” He said. Frieda looked down at the people in front of her. They all stared back expectantly. She took a deep breath, and sat down. Collectively, everyone bent forward on the ground until their fingers dug under the snow, until they could feel the glistening soil from underneath. Frieda meditated, and she could feel the Lifestream pulsing from under the ground. Frieda closed her eyes. She was suddenly aware of every sound, every smell, and every sensation. She could feel the snow falling around her, and the energy that was coursing through her body. She felt her breath become slower, and more calm. The feeling of peace filled her, and the feeling of being one with nature. She lost herself in the tranquility, and the world seemed to melt away. Except something was different this time. She could feel pulsing from above the ground, around her. In her meditation, she could see the other Psychokinetics, their souls, and their energy. They were all glowing. For the first time in a long time, Frieda felt comfortable. It reminded her of the early days before Johanna’s death changed the family dynamic forever. Almost like a true home again. And everyone was her family (Except Gerhard, she still did not like him).