

— *October 4th, 1914. Aigis and Frieda's Room. 4:00 P.M.* —

When he had discovered the German Empire would be stopping in Ruheplatz for a few days, Otto was originally ecstatic. He finally got to interview actual Imperial soldiers that weren't just his dad (Whom he still loved very much). He thought he would get to hang with the big boys, and eventually they could train him a bit on how to be a soldier. But none of the Golden Battalion soldiers even looked in his direction. Simply marching with their Gewehr 98s and hanging up their Anti-Psychokinetic propaganda posters all across the town. This did not deter the young boy, as he found a way to get their attention. But before he enacted his plan, he had some showing off to do.

Aigis and Frieda were in their room. Aigis sat in a chair on her side of the room, reading about the Psychokinetics in Aztec culture. Aigis was stuck on a page she had been enamored with describing the ritual known as the "Elemental Dance" and the psychokinetic power it gave the Aztec shamans. It was a ritual where a King and Queen Elemental, a male and a female, would train their whole lives for elemental magic. When both reached 15, they would be chosen to use clashing elements to create an effects show, like an illusion. The illustrations shown of the Elemental Dance were painted in a beautiful pastel color palette, and the poses were captivating. Aigis longed to see it in action, knowing it would never happen again. Frieda on the other hand, lied in her bed, smacking two dolls against each other to simulate kissing. It had no energy to it, the trademark of an extremely boring day.

The door opened. Irma held the door open while Otto stood in the doorway, hiding something behind his back with a cheeky grin.

"Frieda, your little boyfriend's here." Irma beamed. Frieda sat up on her bed.

“He’s not my boyfriend, mom!” Frieda pouted. Otto took a moment to process what Irma said, and immediately turned red.

“Are you sure? I won’t tell Vergil.”

“MOM!” Frieda yelled. Aigis was too busy looking at the pictures to pay any attention. Otto was flustered beyond belief, but regained composure to speak.

“What she said.”

“She knows I’m just teasing,” Irma giggled. “Have fun, you three.” She sang before closing the white-painted wooden door behind her. Otto shook his head before approaching the two sisters. Frieda hopped off her bed and Aigis slammed her book shut with one hand and set it down in her chair.

“Sorry about the misunderstanding, Otto.”

“I’m used to it by now.” Otto sighed. Aigis pointed to him.

“What’s with the giddy mood?” She asked. This made Otto cackle with a knuckle over his sneering mouth.

“I have something cool to show you guys.”

Aigis crossed her arms, unimpressed. “Is it for a certain someone?”

Otto didn’t answer.

“Since a certain DAY was yesterday?”

Otto licked his lips. He knew exactly what she was referring to. Aigis’ 15th birthday was yesterday. He meant to get her something, but the shiny helmet soldiers have been capturing his attention the whole week. He felt ashamed he couldn't get her anything.

“I’ll make it up to you later,” Otto groaned. He revealed what he was hiding behind his back: It was a letter. Some of the beige scroll had brown spots in some places. “Check this out.”

Aigis accepted the letter. She and Frieda eyed it, not really reading the contents yet.

“Where’d you get this?”

Otto rolled up his sleeves. “One of the Golden Battalion soldiers was black-out drunk in the tavern. This was hanging out of his uniform.”

“So why did you take it?” Frieda asked. Otto puffed up his cheeks, stomping on the floor.

“Those jerks kept ignoring me! Acting like they’re too busy hanging up those posters to notice me. When he comes back for that letter, he’ll HAVE to talk to me!”

Aigis, shrugging, decided to read the contents of the letter. Otto bounced in place, anticipating the sisters’ reaction to his prank. Aigis’ eyes steadily scanned the contents of the letter before they widened. Her mouth opened up a bit as she continued reading. Frieda leaned in, wanting to see. Aigis pushed her away, needing more space. Otto cocked his head to the side.

Aigis finished reading and sat the letter down in her lap. “Otto, can you wait outside for a moment? I want to speak with Frieda.”

“I’ll plug my ears.” He submissively responded.

“Alone?” She continued, raising her eyebrows. Otto’s face contorted, still not sure what Aigis was asking for. Frieda looked at her big sister before turning back to the boy.

“Please.” She requested. Otto let out a long breath and nodded. He exited the room, shutting the door behind him. The sisters walk over to the giant window of the room, gaining as much distance from Otto and the door as possible.

“What’s the matter?” Frieda questioned with concern. Aigis lowered the letter for the younger sister to read. At the top of the letter, it read, “1914 Psychokinetic Sedition Act”. Aigis pointed below the preamble and to a specific section.

It shall be unlawful for any Psychokinetic to reside within Imperial German Territory, regardless of potential intent or supposed allegiance. If one is found to be a psychokinetic, they are to be subjected to execution, public or private. Similarly, those suspected aiding, abetting, harboring or conspiring with psychokinetics will be charged with sedition, and they will also face execution. The Golden Battalion holds the jurisdiction to investigate, apprehend, and execute all psychokinetics and their conspirators. Their authority shall be extrajudicial.

Frieda read it again. Then three times. Then four. She convinced herself that reading it more and more would help make sense of what she was laying eyes on. Nothing changed. Aigis got up and marched towards the door.

“He needs to go. Now.” She scowled. Frieda hopped out of the chair and caught up to Aigis. She grabbed the blonde girl’s wrist.

“Why don’t we just tell him? If he knows, he would understand and maybe help us—!”

“If we tell him, we’re putting HIS life in danger too! The best we can do is get him away from us, and away from the Golden Battalion. If he doesn’t know, it’ll be easier for him to keep our secret.” Aigis reprimanded, yanking her arm free from Frieda’s grip. She opened the door, making Otto jump.

“Otto,” Aigis announced, shoving the letter in the confused boy's hands. “I need you to find the soldier you stole this off of, give it back to him, and do it without anybody knowing. I don’t care how you do it, but make sure they NEVER find out about this.”

“W-What?” He stammered. “I don’t understand.”

“I will explain everything to you tomorrow. Just, listen to me.”

Otto never saw Aigis this emotional before. Her hands were trembling as she handed Otto the letter, yet her piercing blue eyes locked with his very soul. Sure, she could be kind of bossy at times, but he just chalked that up to her being an older sister. Like her yelling at him and Frieda to stop climbing trees or poking a beehive. This time, the tone in her voice was different. She was genuinely distressed.

“Are you sure everything is okay?” He emphatically asked, placing an arm on Aigis to calm her down. Aigis smacked his hand out of the way.

“GO!” She shouted, making the boy run off. Otto ran down the hallway and descended a couple of steps. As his loafer-covered foot reached the fourth step, Otto fell forward. He leaped forward, flying towards the ground. Frieda frantically reached out for his hand. But their fingertips could only graze as Otto barreled down towards the hardwood floor at the bottom. He shut his eyes iron-tight, so he couldn’t see the hardwood floor. He prepared for his neck to snap. An angel, a light, or pure darkness. Waiting for a sign that let him know he met his end.

Nothing happened. In fact, it felt like he had stopped falling at all. The boy slowly opened his eyes, finding himself suspended in the air. He looked up to see the two girls still at the top of the stairs. Frieda stared at Aigis with wide, quivering eyes. Aigis hovered over the stairs, still standing on the top step. A right arm was outstretched towards Otto’s body. Her body was completely still. Not a word. Even the grandfather clock in the living room was snuffed out by the thick tension of silence. Aigis realized the mistake she just made. And it wasn’t a negligible mistake either. She retracted her arm, dropping Otto to the floor. He winced as his body smacked back-first onto the floor. The two girls rushed down to the stairs. Otto’s composure evaporated in that instance. His entire body quaked as he looked into every corner of

the house, trying to find a reasonable, scientific explanation as to how he didn't fall and break his neck just now.

“WHAT WAS THAT?!” He screamed.

Aigis took a breath, trying to come up with a logical explanation. But the moment it danced on her tongue, it immediately evaporated into the air before it reached her vocal chords. She latched onto his shoulders, trying to force him to stop shaking.

“Calm down.” She droned.

“Was that you? Did the earth stop? Was that a trick? Why can you do that? Am I dead?”
The boy started to spiral.

Aigis tightened her grip and shook him harder. She was desperate for him to stop hyperventilating. Frieda could see that things were going wrong and fast. She didn't want Otto to find out like this, but now it seemed like it was too late. “Otto, listen...”

“Am I just dreaming? I'm not, am I? I can't be dreaming if it's painful, right?”

SLAP!

A giant, red disc faded onto Otto's left cheek. He touched his face, still stunned by what happened. Aigis struck him across the face in one, swift, graceful motion. After getting Otto to shut up, she looked him dead in the eye.

“Return that letter. Go home. Sleep it off. We promise, we will tell you EVERYTHING tomorrow. But for today, act like nothing happened. Got it?”

Otto silently nodded frantically. He shot out of the house and into the town, running back home. Aigis and Frieda didn't share another word with each other for the rest of the day.