

— *July 1st, 1925. Munich, Bavaria, 1:12 P.M.* —

Aigis, with her five or so years of experience with homelessness, couldn't figure out what was worse: Being homeless during the summer, or being homeless during the winter. At least in the dead of winter, she could cuddle up with Oswald to warm herself off (he didn't really mind it that much). But in the summer, barely anything seemed to combat the cruel German sun and heat. Even as the clouds rolled over the city, blotting out the sky and causing a light sprinkle, there was only minimal relief from the heat. Her old WWI uniform was already stinky from constantly wearing it, minimal showering and sweating half the day. She couldn't stand the stench that was constantly wafting around her, and her long hair was sticking to her skin, matted and tangled. Not to mention due to her sweating, the uniform would often stick to her, making it difficult to move at times.

"Oswald, how are you like this?"

Oswald looked at her confused. "I was born this way?"

"No, I mean. We've been through some of the worst, most psychologically damaging situations most people won't ever see in their lifetimes. Yet you're still so carefree. Nothing seems to bother you."

Oswald smiled faintly. "Why be upset about the things I lost when I can be happy about the things I still have?"

"Like what? We don't have homes, we can barely eat, it's cold, it rains a lot—"

"I'm alive," He interrupted. "You're alive. We're still friends. If we're at rock bottom, the only way we can go from here is up."

Aigis always hated how Oswald could casually tug at her heartstrings like that. Her sanity was being held by string, gum and toothpicks, and every time he said something nice, a part of

her was repaired, even if it was a small piece. But Oswald's sweet words by themselves could only keep her motivated for so long. She feared for the day it would no longer work on her.

Then she heard a familiar voice that made her head perk up.

“This ‘Weimar Republic’ is not working! Sure, things are stabilizing now, but those are only temporary solutions! How much more until this failing democracy finally crumbles under the weight of its own failure?!”

Aigis slowly stood up. She didn't want to get her hopes up immediately, she could barely even believe what she heard was real. Oswald, noticing her getting up, elected to follow her. They followed the source of the noise down the street, turning at a corner and seeing a large gathering of people. Aigis immediately knew who the person was standing at a makeshift stage, speaking loudly to the crowd. Hitler was back. The same members of the Nazi party in front of the stage, standing guard. This time, they had more than just the simple red swastika armbands. They had brown uniforms with black ties, belts, sashes and boots. It seemed even more people than before were listening to him speak.

“What we need is a leader who is brave enough to stand down to the oppressive allies and let them know how worthless their Treaty of Versailles truly is. We deserve much more than what was given, and these shortcuts the Allies made are only leading us down a path to more suffering, not to recovery! Yet those spineless cowards in the Reichstag still do nothing as we rot under these ridiculous terms imposed upon our proud country! Together, we can make Germany a nation for all pure German citizens! And we can start by eradicating these filthy aliens that have infiltrated the Reich and made us weaker! The Aryan race shall stand tall once again!”

Hitler's speech was met with a grand applause by his followers, with a lot of them chanting and repeating parts of his speech in unison, growing more and more in volume. Aigis

continued watching the group. Once the speech ended and the crowd dispersed, Hitler headed off stage with a few of his closest associates. Aigis ran over to him.

“Herr Hitler!” She cried out with joy. Hitler turned around to follow her voice. She attempted to hug him, but he stuck a hand out and stopped her.

“Not a hugger,” He politely declined. “But it’s good to see you again, Aigis.”

Her face lit up with an innocent joy Oswald hadn’t seen in what seemed like an eternity. He was taken back by just how happy the reunification of them seemed to make her. As much as she enjoyed his company, he got the feeling that Aigis needed another figure in her life. A pillar of support, like a father figure. Not to mention being surrounded by the other Nazis was the closest thing to a large family she’s ever had. He wasn’t angry at her for that.

“I thought you were in jail.” She sniffed, trying her best not to cry.

“I was, but the judges at the trial were cool, so I only served nine months. Prison’s actually not so bad, I don’t see why everyone complains so much about it. I had enough time to write a book and everything.”

“I was afraid I’d never see you again.” She let loose her tears, sniffing. He patted her on the back. She was dirty and smelled horrible, but he understood the struggles of having nowhere to call home. If it weren’t for the war, he likely would still be on the streets himself.

“Judging by your smell and stickiness, you had to go back to the streets?”

She wiped her eyes and nose with her sleeve.

“Say no more. The Nazi party is not going anywhere, and we’re happy to accept you into our family again.” He extended a hand towards her, and she accepted. After they finished shaking hands, Aigis looked up. She stiffened her body, as if she was nervous to say the next words.

“Herr Hitler.” She began.

“Yes?” He said patiently and expectantly. She shut her eyes and bowed.

“We want to join your Sturmabteilung!”

She slowly reopened her eyes, expecting him to lash out. Every time she asked an authority figure for something, an image of Vergil looking down on her with pure disgust and contempt popped up in her mind. Her father usually smacked her upside the head the more “ridiculous” her requests got. He, however, did neither of those things. Instead, his eyes lit up, and his facial expression seemed to be overflowing with excitement.

“You’re interested in joining the SA?”

“Yes. We would both like to join, sir!”

“*We*?” Oswald asked instinctually, to which Aigis elbowed his chest.

“Sir, you and I both understand the state of Psychokinetic citizens in Germany. They’re at risk of extinction, and you want to mercifully put an end to new Psychokinetics being created. I agree with you wholeheartedly and I can help you achieve that goal.”

“I would love for you both to be a part of the SA. As former soldiers, you’ll fit right in. I’ll talk to my guys, get you cleaned up, and have you both on your way.” He went off to a group of his friends, while Oswald whispered to Aigis.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?”

“We’ll have a job, clean clothes and food, and somewhere to sleep at night. This is as close to normalcy as I have felt in a long time, Oswald.”

“So... we can buy bread every day?”

Aigis furrowed her brow. “We can do a little better than bread, but okay.”

“Bread!” Oswald shouted in praise. Aigis slapped his back in celebration

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After a while, Aigis and Oswald got their uniforms. Aigis found the SA uniform leagues more fitting and comfortable than the shapeless German army uniform she had been wearing since 1917. It was likely because unlike the Golden Battalion, who just found a spare infantry uniform and threw it on her, the SA members bothered to get measurements for both her and Oswald. Aigis felt that the SA's brown fitted her more than she initially thought. The armband was tight but not too tight, she liked the tie, the pants were nice and snug, and she thought the boots gave her a certain chic style. That, or maybe she just hadn't seen herself in the mirror with fresh clean clothes in such a long time. Oswald loved the outfit, it reminded him of his days in summer camp as a boy.

Aigis looked in the mirror one last time, checking to make sure everything about her uniform looked nice and clean. There. Hair was secure, pants were tightened, shoes were laced, everything else was properly buttoned up. She looked over to Oswald, who had a big grin on his face.

“Oswald, your armband's on the wrong arm.” She pointed out. Oswald quickly switched the armband around, and walked with her outside.