

**BLACK FILE FIELD ENTRY: THE MAN WHO WALKED AWAY**

The snow was already red.

Not bright red anymore. The cold had darkened it, thickened it, turning it almost black against the pale ground.

The forest around them was silent.

Lapland had a way of swallowing sound in winter. Even gunfire faded quickly into the trees.

A Finnish soldier lay in the snow.

His rifle had fallen just beyond his reach.

His leg was shattered.

He knew that much.

The pain had passed the sharp stage and settled somewhere deeper, somewhere dull and distant where the body simply refused to cooperate anymore.

He tried to move.

Nothing happened.

The sky above the pine trees was pale grey.

For a moment he thought about home.

Then he heard footsteps.

Not running.

Walking.

Slow.

Measured.

The soldier turned his head.

A German infantryman stepped out from the trees.

Snow creaked under his boots.

The uniform was dirty. The rifle in his hands looked tired, like it had been carried through too many winters.

The German saw him immediately.

Their eyes met.

Neither man spoke.

The Finnish soldier understood the situation perfectly.

A wounded enemy soldier alone in the snow rarely survived long.

The German lifted his rifle slightly.

Not aiming.

Just holding it.

The Finnish soldier waited.

The forest breathed quietly around them.

Then the German noticed the rifle lying in the snow beside the wounded man.

He stepped forward.

Picked it up.

For a moment the Finnish soldier thought the man was taking it.

But the German did something unexpected.

He threw it.

Not violently.

Just far enough.

The rifle slid across the snow and disappeared behind a drift where it could not easily be reached.

Then the German looked back at him.

No anger.

No victory.

Only exhaustion.

The kind of exhaustion war leaves behind when it has taken too much from everyone involved.

The German lowered his own rifle.

And without another word...

He walked away.

The trees swallowed him again.

The forest returned to silence.

The Finnish soldier lay in the snow listening to the fading footsteps.

He did not understand what had just happened.

But he was still alive.

—

Far above that frozen forest.

In a layer of reality that rarely intersected with ordinary human time.

Three figures watched.

Ace stood quietly.

Mai observed the branching geometry of probability unfolding across the moment.

Shammy listened to the air.

None of them spoke at first.

Finally Mai said softly,

“That decision had no strategic value.”

Ace nodded.

“None.”

Shammy opened her eyes.

“The atmosphere remembers it.”

Mai followed the spreading probability lines outward.

One decision.

One soldier lowering his rifle.

From that point the timeline split.

Thousands of possible futures spread outward.

Most faded quickly.

But one path continued.

It led to a man who survived the war.

Who lived long enough to have a son.

And that son would one day tell the story.

Mai watched that line continue further.

Another generation.

Another branching.

Another improbable survival.

And somewhere far down that path...

a name appeared.

Mai spoke very quietly.

"...interesting."

Ace looked at her.

"What."

Mai pointed to the probability thread.

"If the German had fired..."

She paused.

"...this branch ends."

Ace followed the line.

Then she saw it too.

Far in the future.

A presence.

A figure standing in ruined castles and broken timelines.

Two red katanas in his hands.

Ace raised an eyebrow.

"...him?"

Mai nodded once.

"Yes."

Shammy listened to the wind moving across the forest below.

"The air approves of the soldier's choice."

Ace looked down toward the snow-covered battlefield.

"So that's where it started."

Mai corrected her gently.

"No."

She looked again at the branching future.

“That’s where it continued.”

They watched the silent forest for a moment longer.

Then the vision faded.

—

Years later.

The story would be told.

A wounded soldier in the snow.

A German infantryman who could have ended it.

But did not.

Some moments in history never receive explanations.

They simply happen.

And the world moves forward because of them.

—

## **BLACK FILE NOTE**

Classification: Human Anomaly

Description: Unexplained act of restraint during the Lapland War. Enemy combatant chose not to execute a wounded soldier.

Immediate outcome: One life continued.

Long-term resonance: Unknown.

Addendum:

If the rifle had fired...

Konrad would never have existed.

[Konrad](#)

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