

Holy Roman Empire #Chapter 21: The Unexpected Economic Crisis - Read Holy Roman Empire Chapter 21: The Unexpected Economic Crisis

Chapter 21: The Unexpected Economic Crisis

Even though he could not convince these cunning men, Ham was not angry, for he knew that they were already moved by his words. They were just too scared to speak their minds.

He was not a revolutionary, either; he had only joined the Revolutionary Party for the benefit of his interests, and he would be an idiot to rebel if he was able to achieve his goal by peaceful means.

What could he gain even after a successful rebellion, considering the battlefield was the whole European Continent?

Are the powerful and noble people born with their standing?

The answer is: Yes!

If the rebellion was a success, the best-case scenario was that he would become the president of the bourgeoisie republic, a situation not necessarily better than his present one.

On the other hand, if it was a failure, presumably the best outcome for him would be being exiled overseas.

In the face of harsh reality, Ham's unmotivated revolutionary enthusiasm abated even more.

For the vast majority of capitalists, supporting the Revolutionary Party was one thing; however, leading the revolution themselves was another thing, since they didn't want to be the president.

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The banquet was difficult to keep a secret, so what happened in the Veris estate on the outskirts of Vienna was quickly passed on to Metternich. In that version of the story, of course, the later secret meeting was not included.

However, Prime Minister Metternich, a man of the rules, who kept the bottom line of the political struggle, could by no means arrest the capitalists who participated in the banquet on the charges of colluding with the Revolutionary Party.

It was exactly his rule-following nature which annoyed him.

He was frustrated because he could only defend himself passively, even knowing that capitalists were conspiring.

"Beset by enemies from within and without" would be the appropriate description of his situation: the nobles, planning something against him, the capitalists, eyeing him covetously, all with the common purpose of getting rid of him.

In the winter of 1847, the public in Vienna had an intuitive feeling that prices of commodities had risen, and in fact, they had risen sharply at a rate that was even visible to the naked eyes.

By the end of December 1847, prices of commodities in Vienna had risen by 47 percent, and the capitalists were trying, little by little, to test the limits of the public's tolerance.

Everyone turned their eyes to the Vienna Government, expecting them to come up with a solution.

Obviously they were disappointed, for the Vienna Government had neither the capacity nor the authority to intervene in prices of commodities.

Very little effect was produced by the numerous measures taken by Prime Minister Metternich.

For instance, the government posted a public announcement ordering businessmen to stop raising prices of commodities, of which nothing came.

And nothing changed after several meetings between the Prime Minister and the capitalists.

Unfortunately, the government also failed to stabilize the price of goods by urgently pouring supplies from outside into the Vienna market. They were blocked by the capitalists and corrupt nobles.

Of course, it was not completely ineffective: at least the speed of price increase was suppressed, and prices did not climb to the peak all at once.

After the last failure, the capitalists did not trust each other much, and in the face of profit, many small capitalists could not wait for the highest prices.

As selfishness is the nature of humans, Franz knew very well that behind the sharp rise in prices in Vienna was the participation of the nobles, although they were motivated only by profit and were not involved in the joint action of capitalists.

Initially, these people had perhaps just wanted to take the opportunity to earn a fortune, but later, blinded by wealth, they had become trapped in a swamp of desire.

However, their luck was so bad that they got caught up in the European economic crisis.

Since 1845, Europe had suffered from poor food harvests, and international food prices soared. As food prices rose, Europe's purchasing power shrank consistently.

In 1846, the price of cotton and cotton textile products in the United States almost doubled, and high prices led to a decline in sales of cotton textile products.

With such decline in the volume of merchandise traded, the capitalists had no choice but to cut jobs: Britain's unemployment continued to soar, railway freight volumes hit new lows, many railway companies were in a state of loss, and the British railway bubble burst in the autumn of 1847.

A slight change in one part might affect the situation as a whole in Europe: when the railway bubble burst, the railways under construction were shut down, and the demand for steel fell.

The crisis quickly affected the steel and coal industry, and 58 out of 137 steel furnaces in Staffordshire were closed.

Production of pig iron fell by a third in a month and a half, while coal production fell by almost twenty percent.

In November 1847, 200 of the 920 cotton textile factories in Lancashire, one of the UK's textile industry centers, were completely closed, and the rest only worked two to four days a week.

More than 70 percent of workers suffered from unemployment or semi-unemployment.

The industrial crisis that broke out in Britain did not attract the attention of Austrian capitalists because neither the British economic crisis in 1825 nor the one in 1837 affected Austria.

As a non-industrialized country, Austria did not even have the basics for an industrial crisis; even if it did, the possibility of an economic crisis would be infinitely low.

Many people had forgotten that Austria was no longer the major power it had been, and, as a non-industrialized country, it could not stand alone in the economic crisis.

The very first country that was affected was France: after the British economic crisis broke out, in order to overcome the crisis, British capitalists began dumping materials overseas, and the unprotected French became the first wave of victims.

By 1848, France's total industrial production fell by 50 percent.

Germany was no exception: as its industrial strength was weak, the impact was even graver.

In the winter of 1847, 3,000 out of 8,000 weaving machines in Krefeld were shut down; in the first half of 1848, only 3 of the 14 factories in Cologne worked; meanwhile, Erfurt's industry was almost completely wiped out.

The Austrian capitalists cried, and the nobles who wanted to take advantage of the crisis also cried. In order to curb prices of commodities, the Vienna government cut import tariffs, and a large number of cheap British goods rushed into the market. It was more than they could bear.

In the face of dumping from an industrial country, any Austrian capitalist with half a brain would choose to retreat from the market immediately.

In January 1848, the prices of all industrial and commercial products collapsed, except food. Everyone was so busy with their own business that they did not have time to care about others.

Some capitalists, running ahead of time, could barely stop the loss, while the ones moving slow were locked up immediately.

Because of oversupply, the prices of industrial and commercial products on the Vienna market fell below their production costs, and the capitalists and nobles who drove up prices were forced to bear their painful losses.

Everyone knew that the economic crisis was coming. In order to reduce losses, capitalists started layoffs. Many capitalists suffered such great losses in this crisis that they simply closed the factories; thus, unemployment in Vienna climbed steeply.

Chapter 22: January Revolution

The sudden economic crisis also confused the Austrian government. It was the first such crisis they had confronted, and they had no experience to help them deal with it.

Since the economic crisis, initiated by the industrial crisis, was different from an ordinary one, their traditional coping strategies would become anachronistic.

Government-funded bailouts?

It was obviously impossible, and Metternich would be stupid to try to save all the capitalists.

Of course, necessary measures had to be taken by the government. For example, prices, which had been rising sharply, returned to a normal level because the government reduced tariffs.

However, the domestic crisis had not been relieved: the capitalists and nobles who had hoarded a large amount of supplies had their turn to suffer and lost their last pennies.

In the case of daily necessities, the prices in the retail market in Vienna were only 66 percent of what they had been in the first half of 1847, and less than a third of the retail prices at the peak in December.

Not the price decline but the decline in purchasing was critical: even at such prices, people did not have the money to buy goods.

This was truly a tragedy.

Under normal circumstances, the wholesale price of daily necessities was 30 percent lower than the retail price, and if retail prices fell, the capitalists would leave the market by losing a fortune, which was acceptable to most of them.

The real problem was that there was no market: there were piles of goods, but no buyers.

Powerful capitalists could perhaps still hold on, but the weak ones had no choice but to run away, with broken capital chains, owing a load of debt to the bank.

As a result, Austria's financial institutions had been hit severely, and after the financial crisis broke out, the vicious circle persisted.

The Great Depression had come, to not only Austria but the entire European continent except Russia, and no one could stand alone.

There was no doubt that the Labor Protection Act introduced by the Vienna Government had to be suspended: when jobs were gone, there was no point to talking about how workers were treated.

The goal the capitalists had achieved—the Vienna government did make concessions and the Labor Protection Act was suspended—became something they did not really want.

The sudden economic crisis had hurt the capitalists badly.

Meanwhile, as market competition became more and more brutal, internal conflicts among capitalists were intensifying.

Prime Minister Metternich became the biggest winner as well as the biggest loser.

When, finally, he successfully thwarted the conspiracy of the capitalists, a mess was waiting for him to clean up afterward.

Franz, as an onlooker, was stunned by this kind of situation. He didn't expect that the whole thing would actually end up like this: the capitalists, the nobles, and the government were all losers in this political struggle.

If there were any victors, Ferdinand I, who did nothing in the palace, was one of them, but he could not understand or feel it himself.

When it came to the working class, they could be regarded as half winners and half losers: the economic crisis in Austria was more serious than any in history, and their lives were even harder; the only gain was the Labor Protection Act, which couldn't be realized yet.

In short, the future would be good, but the present was cruel.

"Archduke, last night, a revolution broke out in Sicily!" fr(e)webnov(e)l.com

The intelligence leader, Tallen, rushed in and brought Franz this shocking news.

Franz was really taken aback by it: didn't the European Revolution start in February, in France?

How could there be a Sicilian revolution?

Well, Franz could admit that his knowledge of Sicily was limited to the beautiful legends, where the land was fertile, suitable for food production, and strategically located in the heart of the Mediterranean.

Beyond that, there was nothing left in his mind. After thinking carefully, Franz remembered a sentence that seemed to be mentioned in the history book: before the February revolution broke out in France, the January revolution broke out in Italy.

The original story was the January revolution in Italy, which initiated the prelude to the European revolution in 1848. It was just mentioned in this way, without unnecessary explanation, and Franz hadn't paid attention to it at all.

What a pit to fall into!

Italy had not been unified yet. At that time, Sicily was still the independent Kingdom of Sicily, which did not have anything to do with Italy.

For this reason, he sent someone to keep an eye on the Kingdom of Sardinia, which would finally unify Italy.

Franz recovered quickly enough: he had not specialized in historical research, and it was normal that he was not familiar with the small events which were not paid much attention in history.

"Is the scale of this revolution large? Did they overthrow the Kingdom of Sicily?"

He could guess why revolution had broken out: the economic crisis had happened, and the public in Sicily couldn't move on.

"Archduke, it's not clear yet. We have too few intelligence personnel in the Kingdom of Sicily, so there is no way to figure out the situation in such a short time!" Tyron explained, embarrassedly.

It was not because he didn't work hard, but because the intelligence work couldn't be completed overnight. It was hard enough already to receive messages in such a short time.

In that era, the wireless telegraph had not been invented, and the wired telegraph was only laid out in big cities. What happened in Sicily could only be transmitted to Vienna after a series of transits.

If the news was spread by itself, it might be delayed for three or five days, or even a couple of weeks.

"Well, that's all. We'd better focus our work on Vienna, Milan, Venice, and Munich because the revolution in Sicily may cause a chain reaction!" Franz said after thinking for a while.

He had already figured it out: things outside were out of his control, and his very first mission was to stabilize his own country before anything else, or at least, to get the message and be prepared before the revolution broke out.

"Yes, Archduke!"

Seeing that Franz didn't blame him, Tallen breathed a sigh of relief. The combat effectiveness of the intelligence organization had decreased a lot over the years, and he, the person in charge, had an inescapable responsibility.

But he didn't know how low Franz's expectations of them were.

As the saying goes, cheap goods are not good, and good goods are not cheap.

In the intelligence organization, more than ninety-five percent of the personnel were volunteers, laboring without any remuneration. What else could Franz ask for?

These were all the achievements of the Habsburg family's management for many years. Conquering Europe on foot was not a joke, and the relationship network had spread to cover the continent of Europe long ago.

It maybe was all right to take advantage of these relationships to communicate with each other about information, but if they should be ordered to handle affairs, Franz wasn't sure he had such strong control.

As for Tallen, he was undoubtedly a temporary substitute. When the intelligence organization built by Franz himself was completed, the only purpose for them would be to draw the attention of the outside world.

After the Sicily revolution broke out, Franz began preparing, and he did not dare to trust others with his life.

With this as an excuse, Franz conducted a training for the Royal Guard and reorganized the members, holding a post without qualifications, alone in one unit.

Chapter 23: Juvenile Officer

Franz, through a series of personnel transfers, finally took control of the Royal Guard. Archduke Louis had no reaction, but Franz didn't know if he really did not understand or was just playing dumb.

Franz felt that he was more likely pretending. The scale of the Royal Guard was small, with only one regiment of troops, but it played an important symbolic role in defending the royal family.

The actual control of this regiment was always in the hands of the Court of Vienna, and even Archduke Louis, the nominal commander, dared not mess with them.

Before Franz trained the royal guard, he had in fact gotten the approval of the Court of Vienna, as well as the warrant of his uncle, Ferdinand I.

The Hapsburg family had long been preparing for his rule, and, if all went according to plan, he would become a member of the Regent Committee in three years. After several years of standing in for Franz, the Regent committee would be dissolved, and the era of the Crown Prince Regent would arrive.

Though Ferdinand I did not want his power transferred into others' hands, unfortunately, he suffered from epilepsy; he had seizures 20 times a day on average and could not manage government affairs at all. Thus, supporting Franz was one of his measures to avoid that.

Well, Franz admitted that he had been fooling around. His uncle was often out of his mind and did some ridiculous things; occasionally, he had paranoia. However, he paid special attention to the Hapsburg family business.

This situation created an opportunity for Franz. Ferdinand I often made extraordinary remarks, and any time Franz found one useful, it became a written document.

In other words, there were many imperial edicts in Franz's hands, but whether they were legal or not depended on the actual situation.

If they were put forward, the Regent Committee would probably veto them all; however, when the time was right, he could also issue these edicts directly without passing through the Regent Committee and make them an established fact.

Although the Austrian government was actually controlled by the Regent Committee, no one had announced explicitly that Ferdinand I had lost the ability to govern, which meant that the Emperor's order was still valid.

The news of the January Revolution spread quickly throughout the European continent. When the news reached Vienna, people were surprised at first, then thought nothing of it.

However, when the news reached Paris, something changed.

From 1840 to 1848, after Gizzo, the leader of the Conservative Party, was elected prime minister, capitalists were appointed to government departments. He also abused his power arbitrarily by approving commercial contracts to please financial groups.

Corruption and bribery in the government were becoming the norm, and as various scandals emerged one after another, the public gradually lost faith in the government.

By this point, only bankers, exchange brokers, railway owners, big mine owners, big forest owners, and big landlords were left among the supporters of the July dynasty.

Since the economic crisis spread to France in 1847, hunger riots had been springing up all over the country. The Labor Protection Act enacted in Austria ignited the workers' strike movement.

In this context, when the foundation of the revolution was ready in place, and a single spark could light the fire of revolution, the people of Paris, who were already full of revolutionary spirit, were naturally affected when the news of the January revolution arrived. *freewebnovel.com*

However, the decadent July dynasty turned a deaf ear to all this. The Banquet Movement launched by the capitalists was stopped by the government. The activity originally scheduled for January 19th, 1848, was postponed to February 22nd.

After checking the intelligence in his hand, Franz breathed a sigh of relief. History had not changed as a butterfly effect of his intervention. The advantage of foresight could also be used safely.

However, he communicated with the military generals even more than ever, including the governors of all the districts, with whom Franz also maintained a correspondence.

Inadvertently, Franz also revealed his concern about the domestic situation, incidentally mentioned the January revolution in Sicily, and boldly made a prediction that it would cause a chain reaction across the European continent.

Whether his remarks would attract attention, Franz couldn't know; he could only listen to destiny and do his best.

He couldn't announce directly that Austria would also have a revolution.

If he did that, he would be regarded as either a god or a madman.

Considering the situation of the Hapsburg family, Franz felt that the latter was more likely.

Now Franz gave full play to the nature of a military enthusiast and inspected the training of the troops around Vienna. The more he saw, the more disappointed he was.

"Albrecht, what can you do to improve the combat effectiveness of the soldiers in the short term? I am talking about the City Defense Army," Franz said, cautiously.

"Franz, this is a very simple question. As long as you can get the noble officers who are dawdling here to go away and promote a group of capable persons to serve as officers, the combat effectiveness of the City Defense Army can be improved immediately!" Albrecht Friedrich Rudolph said after a moment's thought.

Helplessly, Franz said, "Albrecht, this joke is not funny at all. If I could get them to go away, there would be no need to talk nonsense with you here! I mean, is it possible to gather them together for training and let them play a role at a crucial time?"

Yes, Franz did have high hopes for the City Defense Army. These nobles seemed to be the cancer that affected the combat effectiveness of the Army in normal times, but they were different in war times.

If nothing else, at least in terms of loyalty, they were still reassuring.

Once the Vienna revolution broke out, using them to suppress the rebellion would be more reliable than using civilian officers.

The only pity was that their ability did not seem to be very impressive. Even if their only job was to suppress mobs, Franz doubted they were capable.

"Come on, I will give up the position of the commander of the City Defense Army to you. Anyway, I can do nothing about them!" Albrecht said innocently.

Franz thought for a moment and said, "I will accept that. Anyway, since they're such a group of losers, I can't possibly make it worse. However, as to the position of commander of the City Defense Army, you still keep it yourself. I still need your support for the following things..."

"Franz, what's your plan, then? There are a lot of aristocratic officers in the City Defense Army, and they are involved deeply. You can't mess around!" Albrecht said with some concern.

"Albrecht, do I look like someone who messes around to you?" Franz asked Albrecht.

Albrecht shook his head. Franz's impression on everyone was still very good.

Franz continued, "I should also join the Army to serve. I will apply for it shortly. In the next three months, I will be in the City Defense Army.

You can push all those officers who have been dawdling over here and make them receive military training with me. Of course, those who are over 28 years old and those who are famous in the Army will not be included."

He finally recollected that he was only 13 years old when he had become an Austrian army colonel.

If he hadn't set those limits, the nobles who would love to see his humiliation might have sent all the boy scouts to him. In all seriousness, there were actually "baby officers" who were not even weaned but already legends in the Austrian army.

Chapter 24: Showdown

"What? Franz, do you really want to go to serve in the army? No, you can't; you have to stay at home and study. Honestly!" Princess Sophie said angrily.

Her expression was as if Franz, the little boy, wanted to find an excuse to skip classes, which was absolutely disobedient!

Franz explained, "Dear Princess Sophie, this is not service. I will only be in the Army for three months' experience."

"Experience of three months? Is that necessary? In half a year, you will officially begin to serve in the Army; what's the urgency for experience?" Princess Sophie asked.

Franz knew that it was time to explain it clearly because if there was no proper reason, his mother would not approve his going. As for his father's attitude, it didn't really matter. He was never the one, in this family, to make any decisions.

"You know, a revolution broke out in Sicily! From the intelligence analysis I collected, it seems the European continent will soon go through a period of revolutionary intensity."
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In case of anything unexpected, I must learn about the army as much as I can, so as not to be caught unprepared!" Franz explained.

"Do you think Austria may have a revolution?" Princess Sophie said with a concerned look.

Franz nodded and said, "Yes! The situation of the domestic economy is alarming. The struggle between the nobles and the capitalists is very fierce, and the conflict may intensify if the economic condition doesn't improve soon!"

Listening to Franz's serious analysis, Princess Sophie looked solemn and nervous: what a scary term "revolution" was to her.

"You should share these opinions with the government because, if they are prepared beforehand, the power of the capitalists will be too weak to do anything!" Princess Sophie thought for a moment and said.

Looking at her expression, Franz knew that she was still dubious, so he added, "No, no one should know the situation. Before anything comes up, we had better keep silent and stay away from the nobles and the capitalists, because it's highly possible that we'd just draw the fire against ourselves, now that the struggle between them has turned white-hot."

Since politics were always dark, Franz, who wanted to be the emperor, could aid others behind the scenes, but not go into battle in person. Instead, he just left the fight to others!

Looking at Franz, Princess Sophie's face changed, and she said in disbelief, "Are you going to take advantage of this opportunity to seize power?"

Franz knew that Princess Sophie was tempted because no one liked put his fate in the hands of others, much less the Regent Committee, which had controlled the Austrian regime for more than ten years.

The existence of the Regent Committee for such a long time was enough to make the Vienna Court feel uneasy. Even Ferdinand I, when he was himself, knew that this situation was unfavorable to the royal family, especially Princess Sophie.

Anyone who had lived in the court since childhood, even the stupidest person, would have a sharper political sensitivity than an ordinary person.

In history, the reason why the Court of Vienna let Metternich go was not only dissatisfaction with his political reform, but also concerns about his power.

Franz patiently analyzed the situation. "It depends on the specific reality, but the current situation is very unfavorable to the government. The capitalists want Prime Minister Metternich to leave and be replaced with a weak government. Meanwhile, the nobles are also unhappy with him and ready to replace him.

Under these circumstances, it is hard to say whether Prime Minister Metternich can survive this political crisis. When all the energy of the top of the government is involved in the political struggle, who will have the time to care about the lives of the people at the bottom?

As you know, if a person is hungry enough, he'll do anything. There have been hunger riots in France, and the situation in Austria is similar. If the economy cannot improve, the riots will be the least of our concerns.

Not long ago, at a banquet held by the capitalists, the revolutionary party showed up and publicly announced their revolutionary ideas, but the police didn't arrest anyone.

We have reason enough to believe that the revolutionaries have already joined in with the capitalists, but as to the level of cooperation between the two sides, that I don't know!"

After a moment of silence digesting what Franz had just said, Princess Sophie looked around and asked, "Does the Vienna government know? I mean, the Regent committee!"

"They should know, I think, because there were so many people attending the party. I've gotten the news, they must have too!" Franz said calmly.

Princess Sophie looked at Franz carefully, as if she didn't know him anymore, and now she was re-recognizing him.

Well, Franz's performance that day surely had surprised her greatly. These words sounded more like the analysis of a politician who has experienced the many vicissitudes of life than of a 17-year-old boy.

After a long time, Princess Sophie asked, "Franz, when did you draw this conclusion, and when did you start preparing for this?"

Before Franz could answer her questions, Princess Sophie added, "These situations seem to have been under your control all the time... From the time when the initial

conflict between the capitalists and the nobles began until now, you have been preparing for the aftermath; are you not afraid that things could get out of control?"

Fear! Yes, Franz saw fear in Princess Sophie's eyes.

Anyone, including Princess Sophie, who found that a teenager had carried out so many schemes to seize power and was playing with a group of politicians, would feel fear for sure!

Franz explained seriously, "Dear Princess Sophie, this is the only way for an emperor. From the moment of my birth, my life was destined to be extraordinary.

As for the schemes you mentioned, I just followed the patterns: from beginning to end, these things have had nothing to do with me, which means no matter how the situation develops, I am an outsider!

The Austrian Empire was already sick. In this ancient empire, 99% of the people were working hard for survival.

There were even millions of people out there who couldn't feed themselves adequately. Such a country would surely explode from a single spark! In the face of such a situation, what would you do?"

Princess Sophie's face was pale. "But you can get burnt playing with fire. It will not be too late to solve these problems when you succeed to the throne!"

Franz looked at Princess Sophie with an anxious face, and his heart trembled. Soon he recovered, shook his head, and said, "I'm afraid there is no time for me: even if I don't intervene, the domestic political struggle will still continue. When Prime Minister Metternich steps down, there will be no one else in Austria who can repair this country!"

In a panic, Princess Sophie said something she didn't believe: "Then you can also support Prime Minister Metternich!"

She immediately regretted her words: she wanted Prime Minister Metternich to leave but told Franz to support him.

Even in private, the relationship between them was strong, as the history books indicated they'd been good teachers and friends.

Still, political struggle was never about relationships!

Chapter 25: The First Step to Save Austria

January of 1848 in Vienna was extraordinarily cold, and the ice and snow had not melted.

The cold wind blew on Franz's face, which made him shiver, and was even more unbearable to the noble officers behind him, many of whom were already shivering with cold.

If Franz hadn't been on the training ground with them, they would have run back into the house to warm up.

There were no other options for them because the glory of the nobles did not allow them to retreat at a time like this.

Lieutenant General Albrecht, who was in charge of the training, wore a satisfied smile: he hadn't expected that Franz would use this method to force the noble soldiers to participate in training.

The best time to develop a person's willpower was when the world was covered in ice and snow. Franz knew that the peaceful days in Austria were coming to an end. Once the March Revolution broke out, where would the safest place be?

There was no doubt that it would be the military camp!

Whether he would choose to suppress the rebellion, or to run away, it would always be safer to stay with the Army than in the palace.

The noble officers behind him were Franz's bottom line. Although they were seemingly not reliable at all, he had to give it a try, didn't he?

When you find your teammates are weak, don't panic or be afraid, because, in fact, your enemies are even weaker!

This was where Franz's confidence came from: no matter how weak the City Defense Army was, it was still an army, wasn't it?

The enemy he had to face was not a world power, not even an army. They could not even equip every person with a gun!

"Stand at attention!"

"Everyone runs one lap around the training ground, and those who can't finish the task get no food this morning!"

Albrecht issued the order icily, and in the cold wind, many people were shocked to the core.

The training ground was not small, more than ten kilometers around, which meant the lap was not an easy task for these well-fed nobles.

Before anyone could say anything, Franz had taken the lead, so there was no option for the others but to keep up.

No one could be blamed but themselves. Franz had hosted these officers long before the training began.

After a few glasses of wine, they forgot completely themselves. Without thinking about it, they agreed to all Franz's requests.

That meant they had to train with the crown prince. For the glory of the nobility and all their big talk, they had to hold on.

Anyone who could not keep his promises would be the joke of the aristocratic circle! It might be okay to break promises to others, but not to the crown prince.

Many people were waiting for Franz to back down, so they could take the opportunity to ask that the training be less intense. That way, they could keep the good opinion of the crown prince without having to suffer with him.

Obviously, the final result disappointed everyone: Franz had exercised from childhood to adulthood, and he was strong enough to run far more than ten kilometers.

After breakfast began, Franz and the noble officers who had finished the race were eating bread and drinking milk, quietly looking at the large number of troops that were still marching slowly.

When someone fainted onto the ground and was carried out for treatment, everyone pointed at him, as if he was the shame of the nobles. Because of that, the rest did not dare to fake faint.

In the public eye, no one was willing to admit that he was a waste, because of the ego of nobles.

Besides, these weren't some random soldiers. Most of the people who were involved in this training were teenagers or in their twenties. Surely, the older, more cunning ones were not among them.

In Franz's view, these naive teenagers could still be trained, and they might be able to become the backbone of the Austrian Empire.

But not those older cunning soldiers: no matter how they were trained, they could not possibly change their nature. The stronger the ability, the greater the harm.

Watching the last officer finish running, Franz did not laugh, but clapped.

"Archduke, they performed so badly; why do you applaud?" An officer next to him asked Franz with feigned interest.

Against his conscience, Franz said, "No, their performance was not bad. Although the process took too long, they still insisted on completing the task, which is the quality of a true soldier. Of course, personal physical quality still needs to be strengthened!"

After listening to this, the faces around him suddenly turned from cloudy to sunny. Yes, they completed the task and kept their reputation as nobles.

To console themselves, everyone thought then that it was the core quality of a soldier to complete the order, so just forget about the overlong process.

Franz was not stupid enough to deliberately demoralize the troop. No one should look down on this group of nobles, because, in fact, their quality was not bad at all.

They, better than most of the civilian officers, had been receiving military education since their childhood. However, because there was no supervisor around, they had gradually become a bunch of slugs.

To save the Austrian Empire, he first had to save the next generation of Austrian nobles. Only when these people were strong could the Empire really become strong.

In fact, Franz had wanted to join the Army long ago. Unfortunately, he couldn't because he was too young. Even now, he was less than 18 years old. If it weren't for the outbreak of the January revolution, he would have no excuses to persuade his family.

Looking at this group of teenagers who were so easy to fool, he knew that the process of training had a long way to go.

At that moment, the time was too short already for training, or maybe adequate; however, was it enough to train a troop to deal with a mob?

Considering the fact that the government had issued the "Labor Protection Act," the majority of the public would probably not fight with the government too aggressively.

The March Revolution in Vienna in history was defused by political means. Later, the May Revolution broke out, and the government could not control the situation and made a strategic shift. f reeweb novel.com

"Collection!"

Albrecht's serious voice sounded, and the officers who were resting, dragging their tired bodies, slowly lined up in order.

Looking at Albrecht's angry face, Franz knew that the general felt that his men had humiliated him.

The queue was neat, but not the mental attitude. Because of that, Franz recalled the military training at the university, when everyone had been as miserable as sin.

Suddenly Albrecht smiled, and Franz knew that someone was going to suffer.

Albrecht, holding the baton, walked down from above, and then a scream came from the queue behind. Franz took a look back and saw a fat man lying on the ground in a funny way. If you looked carefully, you would find a footprint on his ass.

"Stop looking around!"

Albrecht's cold voice rung out, and everyone quickly withdrew their eyes. After that, everyone was more energetic. From that taste of what might happen, no one wanted to be next.

Even so, there were screams from time to time: Albrecht, waving the baton, looking for the nonstandard ones, was helping them to correct their postures.

There was no other way to choose. All the officers here were nobles. Except for Albrecht who had a high position as a commander, other instructors did not have the courage to punish them.

This moment was a rare opportunity to train them well. If he missed this chance, it would be hard even to find them, much less train them.

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