

## Steel 181

### *Chapter 181: Visiting Graz II*

After dining with his in-laws, Berengar took a bath before entering the room he was provided. It was down the hall from Adela's and Ava's. However, he had no intention to visit either of them in the night. Adela was too young for his interest, and Ava, well, he did not desire her, though he was wary that the woman might pull something in his sleep; as such, he made sure to latch the doors and windows to his room thoroughly. One could never be too careful. If Berengar were in the modern era, he would probably search his room for bugs before resting, but this was the medieval world; such sophisticated technology did not exist at this time. As such, he was able to sleep the night away without concern.

By the time Dawn rose, Berengar had naturally awakened, after all his body was used to waking up at such an hour; despite this, he was left with nothing to do as he had no major work concerns while he was in Graz, and most of his exercise equipment was at home. As such, he decided to do a small workout, where he did his usual routine of pushups, situps, and squats. As for his pullups, he would not be able to do such a thing as he lacked a proper pullup bar. As such, he skipped it for the day and went on a run around the city, though he dressed as a peasant to avoid any trickery that might occur on his journey.

After his journey was over, he returned to the castle where he intended to take a bath, however the moment he opened the door to the bathroom; he noticed that there was a figure already inside the tub, her massive chest was on full display as she scrubbed herself with soap, her long blonde hair was wet, and slung over her delicate shoulders that appeared as if they were sculpted out of jade. Berengar immediately recognized the chest before him to be Ava's, and he stared at it for several seconds before coming to his senses. By the time he came back to reality, he saw that Ava's pretty face was flushed with embarrassment and her mouth agape; she looked like she was about to scream, and as such, Berengar quickly shut the door and hid behind it.

Ava immediately sunk into her tub with embarrassment after Berengar shut the door; she had utterly forgotten to scream, and she did not realize that she had forgotten to latch the door. As such, she was struggling to cope with what had just happened. Berengar, on the other hand, briskly walked away as if

nothing had happened, with a smile on his face. As he was doing so, he thought to himself.

'That one is being saved to the memory banks...'

Afterward, he arrived in his room and waited until a time where he felt as if Ava would have left the tub, which was a safe thirty minutes. After waiting, he returned to the bath where he knocked on the door; when there was no sound, he entered, stripped, and began his bath. It was an exceptionally long bath as he vividly thought about the scene he had witnessed not long before; in times like this, he was glad he had a photographic memory.

After getting out of the tub, Berengar returned to his room, where Ava was waiting for him, sitting on his bed, fully clothed and embarrassed. Berengar had no desire to do anything to her, and as such, he merely sat down in the chair across the room from her. He left the door open in case she tried anything. After sitting in the chair, Ava squirmed around for a few moments before she asked the question on his mind.

"How much did you see?"

Berengar played the part of an idiot and tried to dodge the awkward situation that presented itself.

"Not much; the steam blocked my sight. I suppose that's a good thing..."

Berengar's words stung Ava's pride as a woman, the way he communicated his last sentence made it sound as if he was not the least bit interested in her. As such, she began to pout before expressing her thoughts.

"Why am I not good enough for you?"

Berengar laughed when he heard this statement and made it clear where he stood on the issue.

"You are my fiancée's sister and are already married with three kids. Sorry Cousin, but I have no interest in your body. Maybe if you were a few years younger and still pure, but that ship sailed a long time ago. This awkward situation is entirely on you for not locking the door while you were bathing."

Hearing Berengar's harsh words, Ava began to grind her teeth; Berengar had outright admitted she was used goods, and he had no interest in such a thing. Not only had he walked in on her bathing, but he also had the nerve to insult her afterward. She quickly realized that he was the worst kind of person. As such, she got up from her chair and walked towards the door before asking one more time.

"You really did not see anything?"

Berengar nodded his head with a blank expression; by now, he was a master at lying to women, and as such, Ava snubbed him before walking out the door leaving behind the words.

"Your loss..."

Berengar, of course, laughed the moment she was out of earshot; he had to admit Ava did have a great chest, but Linde's was better, size was not everything when it came to judging such a topic; as such, he released a sigh and voiced his thoughts aloud.

"I just dodged a bullet with that one..."

The last thing Berengar needed was to be entangled with another man's wife. Especially if she already had children, he may be susceptible to beautiful women, but he was not entirely brainless. As such, after calming himself down, he left his room and headed to the dining table, where he joined up with the others for breakfast.

Sitting at the breakfast table was Count Otto, his wife Wanda, Ava, her husband, and her three children, as well as the remainder of Adela's siblings. Adela was also present and saved a seat for Berengar, which Berengar was more than happy to take advantage of. After sitting next to his little fiancée, Berengar tussled her hair as he greeted her.

"How did you sleep last night?"

Seeing the charming look on Berengar's face, Adela smiled and responded to his question.

"I slept well enough."

Berengar nodded his head in approval. It was only after he had said his greetings to Adela that he noticed Ava staring at him with a sense of overwhelming fury, which did not go unnoticed by the other people seated at the table. However, they chalked it up to Ava being pissy about how he snubbed her the day before; after all, she was pretty well known for being petty.

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and Ava was exceptionally so, not only did Berengar catch a glimpse of her naked body, which if she was honest with herself did not bother her so much when compared to the fact that Berengar once more treated her liked her value as a woman was worthless. As such, she was furious with Berengar; she could not understand why he would react in such a way to her curvaceous body. As such, the atmosphere at the table was quite tense as Ava continued to stare at Berengar as if she wanted to set him ablaze with her mind.

Berengar, on the other hand, was quite entertained by this, but he genuinely had no interest in Ava; as such, he spent his time at the dinner table pandering to Adela, which only further increased the wrath in Ava's heart. Berengar was talking to Adela and noticed she was wearing the colors of his house, with the jewelry he had provided to her for her birthday.

"You look good in those colors, Adela!"

Though he was complimenting her, there was also a political statement behind his intent. However, Ava merely pouted, though she had been able to get her hands on some of Berengar's fashions designs, it was never as good as what Adela was able to get her hands on. The reason for this was simple. Berengar reserved the best clothing designs, made from the finest materials for his two women; everyone else had to get their hands on clothing and accessories that were still better than anything else on the market, but not quite the quality Berengar gifted to his women. As such, Ava continued to behave like a jaded lover to Berengar, and he ignored her. Wolfgang eventually caught on to the looks which she was giving Berengar and began to chastise his wife in a low enough voice that it could not be overheard by the others present at the table.

"Quit glaring at him like that! You look as if he has stolen your innocence!"

Wolfgang knew that such a thing had never occurred, but it was still infuriating to see his wife gaze at another man with such passion, even if it was mostly fury. The only people who seemed to sense that something had happened between the two were the Count and Countess; who quickly made a mental note to find out just what had happened between Berengar and their eldest daughter. They may be willing to sell Adela to Berengar for a political alliance that benefitted them. However, they would be damned if they would allow the young Count to do to Ava what he did to Linde; of course, they had no idea that the reason Ava was so furious was that Berengar had rejected her advances. As such, the breakfast continued with a great deal of drama at the table, which Berengar would only be able to relieve himself from when it was finally finished. As for the meeting with Count Otto that would come later in the day.

#### *Chapter 182: Taking Advantage of a Crisis*

After Berengar shared an awkward meal with his inlaws, he and Count Otto finally moved into the old Count's study, where they could communicate about the issues at hand. Count Otto was aware that Berengar was primarily here to see Adela, but officially the young Count was in Graz to discuss business; as such, the two men quickly got to the issues at hand, with Count Otto taking the lead.

"So Count Berengar, tell me what is so important that you would cross a battlefield just to speak with me in person?"

Berengar smiled at the way his uncle addressed him, in a formal setting such as this, referring to Berengar by his noble title was a way to show respect to his position; Berengar followed in a suit when he gave his reply.

"Count Otto, I am here to address the ongoing crisis in the borders of Austria, by now the Bavarians have taken Vienna, and occupy large portions of Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Salzburg, and K?rnten, the only three Counties left that are remotely intact are that of our regions, and Vorarlberg. As such, I have come to request your assistance in resisting Bavarian Tyranny."

Count Otto narrowed his eyes at Berengar, he was not yet aware that Vienna had fallen, nor the consequences it had; after all, he did not have a spy in the

Duke's Court. Thus he was unaware of what had recently transpired. As such, he attempted to clarify his confusion.

"Since when did Vienna fall?"

Berengar was aware that his uncle was in the dark of the recent developments in the war for Austria. As such, he quickly informed the mighty Count of the information that he was privy to.

"The Castle of Vienna fell a few days ago. If everything has gone as planned, then my agents were able to smuggle out one of the late Duke Wilmar's heirs before the rest were executed, thus sparing the main Habsburg line from the brutality of Duke Dietger. When he arrives in Kufstein, I plan to establish a government in exile so that we may fully resist the oppression that Duke Dietger and his army of Bavarians bring forth!"

Count Otto noticed that Berengar was sure of the outcome, despite not providing any substantial evidence; thus he questioned him further.

"Do you have any evidence of these claims?"

In response to this, Bernegar merely chuckled before responding to his Uncle's interrogation, he was confident enough in his spy network that they had succeeded in their endeavors. After all, he was traveling to Graz while they were at work rescuing Conrad from the Bavarians, so he had no way to know for certain if everything went according to plan.

"Admittedly at the moment I am lacking in evidence, however, I am confident in the ability of my underlings. In the upcoming days, I am certain that my claims will become public knowledge. So until you can confirm my words for yourself, why don't we act as if they are the truth, and plan accordingly?"

Though Count Otto was uncertain about whether or not Berengar's claims were true, the sheer confidence the young man had to make plans based on the assumption that everything had gone according to his desires was enough to convince Otto that the likelihood of such an outcome was high. As such he sighed in response to this news and voice his innermost thoughts.

"So my worst fears have become realized. Tell me which of Wilmar's heirs did you rescue?"

Berengar smirked as he revealed the name of the heir that he had specifically chosen to save from the Bavarians' wrath.

"Conrad..."

Immediately Count Otto's face twisted as he heard those words; he was well aware that Conrad was by no means fit to rule the Duchy of Austria. As a wise man, he could already guess what Berengar was planning; as such, he immediately began to protest.

"You saved the youngest and least competent of Wilmar's heirs so that he can be your puppet while you possess the real power behind the throne?"

Berengar did not deny the charges. Instead, his lips curved into a sinister smile before he professed his guilt to the man who questioned him.

"I am afraid that I am, in fact, guilty of the charges you lay before me. However, let us be brutally honest with ourselves here. Do you genuinely believe that in the entire realm, there is anyone that is more fit to lead our Duchy than myself during these darkest of days?"

Count Otto had a hard time believing that Berengar would outright admit to his schemes, but it appeared as if the young Count was unafraid of the consequences in doing so; after all, he knew that his uncle would not reveal his plots, nor side against him.

The two men were related by blood. They also shared a similar goal: to reunite Austria; if Otto opposed Berengar's wishes, he would create a civil war between the Austrian nobility who remained free from Bavarian occupation.

In such an event were to occur, Otto knew that Berengar would ultimately be the victor and would likely succeed in his efforts to repel the Bavarian invaders. Either way, Berengar would install a puppet on the ducal throne of Austria and claim power for himself. Resisting such an inevitable outcome was an act of futility.

Thus Count Otto sighed heavily before accepting the result; he recognized that by not seizing the opportunity to break the Bavarian siege of Vienna, he had played right into Berengar's hands, allowing the young man to usurp the power of the Duchy for himself.

Indeed his nephew was an ambitious and cruel man. Nevertheless, by marrying his youngest daughter off to Berengar, Otto ensured that his Dynasty would also rise alongside that of the von Kufstein's. As such, Otto had no plans to spoil his young nephew's endeavors. After agreeing with Berengar's schemes, he quickly asked the question on his mind.

"So, what is it that you need of me?"

Berengar once more grinned as he heard the result, the look in his eye was that of an evil mastermind who was pleased that his ambitions were progressing smoothly. Thus, he answered Otto's thoughts without delay.

"It is simple; I need you to endorse me openly; I fear that despite my stern warning, Conrad might still be a bit upset over the fact that I am engaged to the woman he fancies. What I need of you, the father of the said woman is to help convince Conrad that I am the best choice for the position of regent. There is little doubt in my mind that he will try to select you to fulfill that role, even if it is out of spite."

Count Otto nodded his head in agreement; Berengar's concerns were a likely outcome if left to their natural events. If that were the case he would do his best to convince the spoiled brat that Berengar was the best man for the job; however, another worry instantly appeared in Otto's mind as he thought about Berengar's schemes. Thus he voiced his concerns.

"What about the Count of Vorarlberg? Surely he would be a potential candidate for the position."

However, Berengar's reaction surprised Count Otto as the young man merely laughed at his worries before replying with an arrogant expression.

"Do not worry, the Count of Vorarlberg owes me a significant debt for sending troops to his aid; there is also the fact that so long as my armies are on his



soil defending his lands, he will never oppose my wishes. The consequences of doing so would be dire, to say the least..."

Count Otto was not a foolish man; he immediately realized the threat that Berengar hid behind his words. If the Count of Vorarlberg were to vie for the position of regent, Berengar would turn his armies defending the borders of Vorarlberg to attacking its capital.

The middle-aged Count instantly realized that allowing Berengar's troops military access to his lands was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they were powerful enough to defeat any potential invading force and could be a great ally. However, in the very next minute, they could be enemies and deal far more damage to his lands than any other army in the world.

After realizing this, Otto nodded his head in agreement and said no more; he would do as Berengar wished. After all, so long as Adela was set to marry Berengar, they would remain allies, and Berengar was a powerful ally to have.

After thinking about Adela's position, Otto immediately remembered his concerns from breakfast. He quickly began to shift the subject so that he could find out the exact nature of Berengar's relationship with Ava.

"So now that we have that settled, I have a question I would like to ask you if you do not mind?"

Berengar was caught off guard by this and raised his eyebrows in response, realizing it had nothing to do with his plans, his curiosity was peaked, and thus, he entertained Otto's questioning.

"Go ahead; I have nothing to hide."

After receiving his nephew's approval to interrogate, Otto quickly asked the question on his mind.

"What exactly happened between you and Ava, for her to be behaving so strangely this morning while we were eating breakfast?"

Berengar immediately broke out into laughter when he heard such a comment; Otto was not like his own father; he had a critical eye for social

issues and quickly noticed something was amiss; however, the man was overthinking it, because of such confusion Berengar decided to clarify the issue before it turned into something serious.

"Trust me, Uncle, I am not interested in Ava; this is a misunderstanding. She forgot to lock the door to the bath, and I accidentally walked in on her; of course, I immediately retreated when I saw such a thing. However, she later came to find me in my room and attempted to seduce me, where I thoroughly rejected her. She is in a poor mood because I implied I had no interest in a used woman."

A giant scowl formed on Otto's face; if one looked closely, one could even see a vein appearing on his forehead. Though he was not Angry for the reasons Berengar thought, it was only when the man revealed the reason for his fury in the form of a question did Berengar thoroughly understand why his uncle was so upset.

"She did what?"

Berengar had anticipated the man being enraged at him for walking in on his daughter while she was bathing, but instead, he was more concerned with his eldest daughter's actions. Thus Berengar decided to add fuel to the fire to punish Ava for acting so arrogantly.

"She tried to seduce me. Honestly, I don't believe she has any interest in me personally. Instead, I think she is jealous of the relationship between Adela and myself and is simply trying to create drama. For a woman who is married and has three children, she acts like a child..."

After hearing this news, Otto sat down in the chair next to him; he needed a breather; why was it that so many of his children were trying to vex him into an early grave? After taking a few deep breaths to calm himself down, Otto quickly replied to Berengar.

"Thank you for being honest with me; I will take care of this matter so that she does not cause you or her sister any further insult."

Afterward, the man walked out of the room in a fit of fury. Berengar merely grinned at the sight while thinking to himself.

'You have brought this upon yourself Ava, if you were not such a harlot trying to seduce your sister's fiance, you would not be in such a position.'

Thus Berengar and Otto's meeting for future events had concluded; all that was left for Berengar's visit to Graz was to spend time with his darling little fiancée.

*Chapter 183: You are the perfect wife, did you know that?*

After finishing his meeting with Count Otto, Berengar found that he now had unlimited free time; as such, he quickly searched for Adela, where he intended to spend the day playing around with her. He rarely had as much free time as he did while on this diplomatic visit; thus, he intended to make the most of it.

After crossing through the hallways looking for Adela, Berengar soon found himself face to face with Wolfgang, who did not have the most pleasant expression on his face. Instead, he stared at Berengar with an intense gaze of fury, as if his heart contained the fires of Tartarus in its depths. Berengar could tell by the look on his face that Ava had said something; as such, he met Wolfgang's furious gaze with a condescending smirk.

Wolfgang, however, noticed Berengar's expression and immediately assumed it meant his guilt as he approached Berengar and tried to latch onto his collar, however before he could do so, Berengar had grabbed ahold of the man's wrist and put him into a wristlock which forced the man onto his knees as he winced in pain.

Though Berengar was by no means a seasoned grappler, he had gone through basic combative training in the Army during his past life, and as such knew a few tricks, he could use to subdue an opponent. As Berengar applied pressure to the lock that he firmly grasped onto, he began to chastise the man for his violent attempts.

"You know Wolfgang; it is not polite to assault your superiors for no reason; you should learn your place!"

On the other hand, Wolfgang verbally struck back at Berengar, especially over his claims of superiority; if anything, in Wolfgang's eyes, he was superior because he was born into the position of Count, instead of being an upstart taking advantage of the crisis in the realm.

"Superior? Don't make me laugh! You are nothing but a lowly Baron who has risen through the ranks by profiting from the war which ravages our lands!"

Berengar's tongue was as sharp as always; if anything, the words he spoke next hurt the man who was struggling in his grasp far more from the pressure from the wrist lock.

"And yet, I am capable of defending my lands, where you hide in your wife's homeland, allowing your brother to fight your war for you. Now, why don't you tell me the reason that would cause a man in your position to attack me the moment you saw my charming face?"

Wolfgang felt no desire to explain his rage to Berengar, a man he deemed to be a lecherous, amoral tyrant. Thus he responded with vulgarity.

"Go fuck yourself!"

After hearing this stereotypical response, Berengar sighed before completing the wrist lock, where he broke the man's wrist without any mercy. Berengar had learned his lesson about showing compassion to those who sought to do him harm; as such, he was ruthless with how he decided to handle the situation.

After a loud cracking noise emanated through the cold stone hallway, followed by the wailing that sounded as if it came from a wounded pig Berengar released the man and allowed him to wallow in his tears on the tile below. Berengar gazed coldly at the current Count of Salzburg before giving the man a warning.

"I shall remember your attempt to do me harm on this day. When I finally liberate your lands from the Bavarians, I will make sure it is your brother and not you who is named Count of Salzburg. If you come at me again, you will find yourself buried six feet under, in an unmarked grave! Do not test me..."

With that brief exchange, Berengar walked away from the man who lay in the fetal position while clutching his broken wrist. Berengar thought nothing of his cruelty; after all, a man like Wolfgang was neither clever nor powerful enough to pose any harm to him. If anything, he had been lenient with his response to

the man's violent actions. A broken wrist was by no means a severe injury and would heal itself in time.

While Berengar exited the scene with confidence, the Castle guards quickly responded to the sounds of Wolfgang's wailing and dragged him off to the Court Physician. Meanwhile, Berengar continued on his journey to locate Adela, and when he finally found the girl, he noticed she was wearing a white and golden gown while playing the harp.

Dressed in such extravagant attire, with a serene expression affixed on her face as she closed her eyes and strung the chord of the harp, almost made Berengar believe that she was, in fact, an angel, not a human. Nevertheless, he knew such a thing could not be the case and nearly stood by and waited for the young teenage girl to finish her rendition of the song that she was currently playing.

Adela was utterly unaware that Berengar had arrived and was leaning on a pillar listening to the sound of her music, and as such continued for a while before halting, where she released a short sigh of breath before opening her eyes and seeing her fiance gazing at her with a smile filled with admiration, and respect.

The young petite beauty with golden hair and gemstone-like sapphire eyes quickly began to flush in embarrassment as she realized her fiance had been listening to her the entire time; however, what came next shocked her. As Berengar slowly started to clap before escalating into full applause. The words that followed continued to add to her embarrassment.

"I must confess I am rather embarrassed as your fiance. To think that you had such talent in the art of music, and I was unaware for all this time. I must say I doubt even an angel in heaven could perform in such a manner!"

Adela could barely look at Berengar while in such a flustered state; her cheeks were as red as roses as she heard his praise. It had been so long since she had last seen Berengar before he arrived in Graz that she was greatly concerned about him, now seeing him with an eyepatch, she realized that he had suffered in her absence while she stayed locked up in the Castel of Graz like some form of fairy tale princess.

Thus Adela rose from her seat before slowly approaching Berengar; when she arrived before him, she reached up and wrapped her palms around his face while staring into his one good eye with a worried expression on her face.

"You have suffered dearly during my absence, haven't you?"

Berengar wanted to bluff his way through her statement, but in truth, life had become rather difficult since he lost the use of his right eye. As the young girl gazed at him with empathy and compassion, he finally lost control of his tough facade and smiled bitterly as a gloomy expression took hold of his scarred yet, handsome visage, doing so, he nodded, which confirmed to Adela her suspicions.

Thus she hugged onto Berengar tightly in an attempt to cheer him up before gazing up at him with an adorable yet inquisitive gaze.

"Can I see it?"

Berengar instantly knew what she was referring to, and as such, he quickly released her grip before placing his hands on his eyepatch and slowly lifting it off of his head. Though his right eye was closed, it eventually opened, revealing an intact but scarred eye. The ugly gash that had initially been there during the early days of the injury was replaced with a verticle scar that connected the gap between the scarred portions above and below his eye.

Adela had held her breath throughout the slow reveal, but now that she was looking at Berengar's injury, she realized it was not as hideous as she had thought it would be; as such, she released her breath before attempting to cheer Berengar up by complimenting the look.

"It is not ugly like I expected it to be; I think it gives your charming appearance the character of a battle-hardened veteran!"

Berengar chuckled bitterly in response to her words before revealing his innermost thoughts.

"It is not the appearance that bothers me; it is how difficult it has become to function normally. I still can't ride to the forefront of the battlefield like I used to. Instead, I must allow my commanders to lead my troops into battle while I

sit back from afar like a coward. Tell me, Adela, how can I be a great man who inspires men to follow him into battle if I am incapable of doing such a thing?"

Adela finally understood what had been eating at her fiance this entire time; Berengar was the type of man to lead by example. At the moment, war was raging at his borders, but instead of leading the charge, he was sitting back in Kufstein eating luxurious food while drinking the best beer and wine.

Despite this, his forces had to endure the onslaught of an enemy determined to bring down his realm. To Berengar, there was nothing worse in this era, where battles were primarily fought in close proximity than hiding far from the warzone allowing your troops to fight in your stead. To him, it was the act of a coward, and as such, he had felt that he was cowardly in his actions.

After overhearing Berengar's concerns about his current position, Adela put on a bright smile as she informed Berengar of what she genuinely thought about him.

"What makes you great is not only tied to your victories on the battlefield or how you lead your men into the fray. Rather it is in large part due to the expense you have gone to ensure that your people benefit from your conquests and the wealth you gain."

Adela took a brief pause to compile her thoughts and then continued her rant about Berengar and how she and many of his supporters viewed him.

"What you have done to Kufstein, what you are doing to Tyrol, and potentially one day even all of Austria is something no other man in this era can achieve.? So you have suffered a minor setback, did you not tell me that Alexander suffered multiple mortal wounds, and yet he always recovered to lead his troops into further glory?"

Eventually, she finished her speech with words of encouragement to Berengar, ones that he would forever remember inside the depths of his heart.

"You will recover from this, and when you do, all of your enemies shall remember the bravery and fortitude that you use to rally your troops to victory!"

Having heard Adela speak of him in such an honorable light, Berengar instantly felt like the weight that had been secretly hanging from his heart had finally released its hold over him. As such, he thanked Adela by hugging her tight into his embrace and kissing her on the forehead before complimenting her.

"You are the perfect wife, did you know that??"

This response immediately caused Adela to blush as she quickly glanced around to see if anyone was watching the romantic display; after realizing that nobody else was nearby, she finally relaxed and enjoyed the moment.

*Chapter 184: I shot myself in the foot there, didn't I?*

Unfortunately, the romantic moment between Adela and Berengar did not last long. Soon after it began, Ava came rushing into the room; she was practically steaming from the fury within her heart. If looks could kill then, Berengar would be a dead man.

Seeing the deadly glare in her eyes, Berengar immediately began to smirk in the same condescending manner he had done to Wolfgang shortly before breaking his wrist. The young woman quickly ran up to Berengar and placed her finger in his chest before scolding him like a child who had gotten caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

"You! What did you do!?! Why did you break my husband's wrist!?!"

Berengar merely laughed at Ava while Adela gazed in confusion at the two; after taking his time to enjoy the moment, Berengar finally responded to Ava with a question of his own.

"What exactly did you tell your husband that would make him so enraged to the point where he deliberately searched for me so that he could assault me?"

Ava quickly realized what had transpired. She exaggerated the events from earlier in the morning to her husband, going so far as to accuse Berengar of picking the lock to her bath so that he could peep on her. Afterward, Wolfgang was thoroughly outraged by Berengar's alleged behavior and sought vengeance on behalf of his wife, which resulted in the current situation.



However, before Ava could spin this event further in her favor, Berengar broke the silence and added a statement to his question.

"Next time, you should pick a better attack dog; your husband is a worthless fool."

Berengar grabbed ahold of Adela's hand and began to lead her into the corridor when Ava shouted out from a distance.

"You think you can peep on me in the bath, and there won't be consequences? I wonder what your fiancée thinks of your actions!"

Adela was quite startled by these accusations and looked at Berengar with cautious eyes; though she wanted to believe he would not do such a thing, he had cheated on her with Linde in the past. She knew that her sister was an attractive young woman and could easily catch Berengar's glimpse.

Seeing Adela staring at him in such a manner, Berengar's ire was thoroughly provoked by Ava; rather than tolerate her words, and try to explain his actions civilly, he walked up to the woman and backhanded her across the face before responding to her accusations.

"Harlot! First, you try to seduce me, then when I reject your offer, you sick your hound on me! Now you slander my reputation! Because you are my cousin, I will be lenient, but this is your final warning, come at me again, and I will make sure that you and your husband share the same unmarked grave, now get out of my sight!"

Ava was furious, not only at Berengar but also at Adela, who stared at her with a look of pity; after hearing Berengar's words, Adela was smart enough to piece together what happened; after all, she knew enough about both Berengar's and Ava's character to accurately guess what had transpired to cause all of this drama. She would not be surprised if her sister Ava had purposely left her bath unlocked so that Berengar might stumble into it.

Ava was rubbing her cheek, which was now red from the strike she had received from Berengar, she had never been treated in such a manner before, and as such, she did not know how to react. On the one hand, she wanted to skin Berengar alive. However, the more rational part of her brain told her that

was simply impossible; her husband was neither clever enough nor powerful enough to harm the young Count of Tyrol.

Thus her actions revolved around fleeing the scene with tears in her eyes and complaining to her father. However, Ava was utterly unaware that her father was already mindful of her attempts to cook up drama needlessly, and as such, was already intending to give her a thorough scolding.

After Ava fled the scene, Adela began to pout at Berengar, and when he turned around to look at her, he noticed he was not entirely off the hook yet. Before he could protest his innocence, Adela caught him off guard with a question.

"Peeping on my sister while she is in the bath, huh?"

Berengar instantly felt awkward from the accusation and attempted to defend himself.

"In my defense, she left the door unlocked; I merely entered the bath after realizing it was unlocked; how was I supposed to know she was bathing inside."

On the other hand, Adela was more curious about how much he had seen and thus inquired about it.

"How much did you see..."

Berengar decided the best course of action was to tell a half-truth. Obviously, he could not allow the girl to know that he found her sister attractive, but if she later found out that he lied to her about seeing her half-naked, she would surely be outraged.

"Only her bare chest... However, it was not nearly as magnificent as Linde's, and as such, I was not tempted by it!"

Adela reacted in a way that Berengar had not expected; the young girl was trembling with anger when she realized that Berengar's first instinct was to compare her sister's chest with Linde's. Not only that, but he had the nerve to brag about Linde's chest being superior. Did that not mean that when Adela

herself finally grew into her full figure that she too would not be as good as Linde?

Thus Adela instantly shouted at her fiance before storming off to her quarters.

"Berengar! You big dummy!"

It took Berengar a few moments to realize his mistake before he caught onto exactly what had angered the little girl. After it finally registered in his brain, he placed his palm on his forehead and sighed heavily as he spoke to himself alone in the room which contained the harp.

"I shot myself in the foot there, didn't I?"

...

While Adela was off pouting alone in her room, Ava complained to her father about Berengar's alleged misdeeds.

"Daddy, he peeped on me in the bath, and when my husband confronted him, the scoundrel had the nerve to break his wrist! Do something about this!"

Ultimately Ava felt like she could get what she wanted by exploiting the drama she had created, and that was to break Berengar's and Adela's betrothal. After all, she was incredibly jealous that her youngest sister was engaged to Berengar, considering he was so much more accomplished than her husband. It filled her with fury to know that Adela had snagged a better man than her.

However, Otto was not an idiot, he knew his children's personalities, and Ava was among the worst he had raised, a spoiled brat of low cunning who needlessly caused drama to entertain herself. Thus he stared at her with a stoic expression as he voiced his discontent.

"Cut the crap Ava, do you honestly expect me to believe Berengar is the one at fault here? Since you have returned to this Castle with that idiot husband of yours and your three children, you have done nothing but stir up trouble with Adela. I have permitted your childish tirades long enough; for Christ's sake,

you are a Countess and a mother; think of your position before you go around trying to seduce your sister's fiance!"

Ava was stunned. Berengar had gotten to her father first and had told his side of the story, which was essentially the truth of the matter. She began to pout at her father and plead with him.

"Daddy, please! "

However, the Count shook his head before reprimanding his daughter once more.

"Do you have any idea who you decided to provoke? Berengar is a vicious and cruel man to those who seek to do him harm. Do you have the slightest clue about what happened to Lambert after the boy crossed him?"

Ava quickly crossed her arms and said in an undeserved smug voice

"He initially sent the boy to the Teutonic Order, where he returned with an army and was killed in battle!"

Otto stood up from his seat and crowded his daughter in the act of intimidation before telling her the truth of the matter.

"That is the official story; however, what you probably have not heard is that after Berengar personally killed his little brother in the heat of battle, he had Lambert's skull removed and turned into a golden chalice which he uses to drink from every day!"

A look of horror spread across Ava's face as she heard the message; the German people had not engaged in such barbarism since the Dark Ages. Yet, Berengar had resurrected such a savage tradition and with his brother as the victim. Only now did the young woman begin to comprehend the monster whose tail she had stepped on.

Seeing her daughter suddenly realizing his intent, Otto continued on his efforts to frighten her out of messing with Berengar in the future.

"Tell me, Ava, if the man is willing to engage in such savage cruelty to his brother, what do you think he will do to his cousin and her idiot of a husband? That man will one day be the Duke of Austria, is riling up your little sister worth making such a monumental enemy?"

Ava was instantly reminded of Berengar's parting threat and felt a shiver down her spine, forcing her to sit down in the chair next to her as she thoroughly contemplated her actions. It was only then she realized the end of her father's sentence.

"What do you mean he will be the Duke?"

Count Otto merely shook his head and informed his daughter slightly of the ongoing political battle in Austria.

"Duke Wilmar is dead, and so are his living heirs. Vienna has fallen, Berengar has already made a ploy to claim the title of Duke after he drives the Bavarians from our lands, and make no mistake, he has the power to do so! You should apologize to Berengar and your sister before an irreconcilable grudge is formed."

Realizing the grave mistake she had made, Ava quickly became covered in a cold sweat and silently made a vow in her heart that even if she had to sell her body to Berengar to repair their relationship, she would resolve this conflict no matter what the cost.

Of course, Berengar had no plans for such a thing; now that he had two loyal women by his side, he did not need a third. He had always said two women was the perfect number for a man to have. The only way he would entertain the idea for a third was if it meant forming a critical alliance with a powerful Nation. Instead, it would take some time for him to find a way to exploit Ava and her husband's apology in a way that benefitted his interests.

### *Chapter 185: Sweet Dreams!*

After the drama that unfolded during his stay at Graz, Berengar found himself in an awkward position; Adela was not speaking to him at the moment due to several complicated reasons that Berengar was too dull in social matters to properly comprehend.

As Berengar was thinking over this problem he had no way out of, he heard a knock on his door. As such, he cautiously opened the door and peered out from the crack in it. In the doorway was Adela, who was still dressed in her white and gold attire from earlier.

She had a pouting look on her face, though it no longer contained the fury of a woman scorned, and as such, Berengar relaxed his guard a little while opening the door slowly. As soon as the door opened most slightly, Adela pushed her way into the room and sat down on the bed with her arms crossed and her cheeks puffed out. After a long and awkward silence, Berengar was the first to broach the subject; he decided to bite the bullet and apologize.

"I am sorry if I offended you; I should not have mentioned Linde's figure when defending my actions..."

Berengar stared at Adela for a few moments with a puppy dog look in his eyes before the young girl finally spoke.

"Do you honestly think I am mad about the fact that you mentioned Linde's near-perfect body?"

Berengar looked at Adela with confusion; he had no idea why she was upset if it was not because he mentioned her rival. However, those were not the words that came out of his mouth. Instead, he merely questioned her phrasing.

"Near perfect?"

This immediately caused Adela to pout again, and she quickly scolded Berengar.

"Don't push it!"

Seeing her mood quickly sour, Berengar decided it would be best to shut his trap and thus took his scolding from his future wife as a man. Adela, of course, was more than happy to do so; as such, she started her lecture by asking Berengar a simple question that he did not expect.

"Berengar, you don't have the slightest clue why I am angry, do you?"

Berengar shook his head; at this point, it was better, to be honest with his fiancée and so he acted accordingly. Seeing his reaction, Adela sighed before loosening her posture and collapsing on the bed, where she sprawled out on it before expressing her long and complex thought process.

"At first I was angry because you said you were completely untempted by Ava's body because Linde's body was better, I had time to think about why that was, and I eventually concluded that I was worried about the future; when I finally grow into my full figure, which is most likely going to turn out like the rest of the women in our family, that you would not be interested in me in the slightest, because you have Linde..."

Berengar listened to Adela's complaints closely and realized that this was a concern that he never even considered to be a possibility; however, before he could address her worries, she sat up from the bed and crossed her legs while resting her cut doll-like face on her hand where she proceeded to glare menacingly at Berengar. Immediately her tone shifted from understanding to wrathful, which caused the hair on Berengar's neck to spike up.

"Then I realized that such a thing was simply impossible. Though Linde's body is perfectly proportioned, so are many of the women in our family! Ava used to have an even better body than she has now before she had her three kids, so clearly, it was not that you found her unattractive, as I know you like a full-figured woman! When I realized that, I knew that you lied to me because you were afraid to tell me the truth, that my sister's body aroused you! I'm right, aren't I?"

A thirteen-year-old girl was lecturing Berengar about finding her elder sister attractive; Adela of course was right on the money; Berengar lied to her to defend his actions. As such, he was sitting on his knees with his head bent like a small child being lectured by his mother for starting a fire in the living room. After Berengar's silence filled the room, Adela snapped at him.

"Well, aren't I?"

Berengar quickly nodded his head in affirmation without saying a word, which Adela found to be unbecoming of the infamous Tyrant of Steel, so much so that she laughed before making fun of him.

"Why are you so afraid? It is not like I'm going to have you beheaded..."

Berengar, of course, took a few moments to collect his thoughts before he let out a defeated sigh.

"After screwing up with Linde, I feel like I have been walking on thin ice around you as if I am one more mistake away from you leaving me, and I am terrified of such a thing. So I lied about finding your sister attractive because I felt if you found out the truth, you would think I am a lecherous fool and abandon me."

After hearing Berengar tell her the truth about how he felt, which is all she ever longed for, tears began to form in Adela's eyes. She had no idea that he felt like he was walking on eggshells the entire time he was around her, and such words pulled on her heartstrings.

Adela got down from the bed and kneeled next to Berengar, which alerted him; however, in the next moment, before he could react. The teenage girl grabbed ahold of his head and stuffed it in her lap. After doing so, she looked away from Berengar, trying not to show off how embarrassed she was. Where she muttered in a low voice that was just loud enough for Berengar to hear correctly.

"Dummy! I would never leave you!"

Berengar fought to prevent a smile from appearing on his face, but it was a losing battle. As an avid fan of anime and manga in his previous life, he had always desired the fabled lap pillow, but even after living two lives, he had yet to have such a thing occur to him until now.

While Berengar rested his head in Adela's lap, she began to stroke his silky golden hair, completely undeterred by the grease that coated her fingers as she did so. The two sat like that for some time, to the point where Berengar nearly fell asleep.

Unfortunately, the endearing scene came to an end when another knock appeared on the door. The familiar voice behind the door belonged to Ava, who had come to make amends with Berengar.



"Berengar, are you in there? I have come to apologize for my actions..."

Both Berengar and Adela were scowling the moment they realized who the knock belonged to, this little vixen had caused so much trouble between the two of them in such a short time, and here she was ruining their reunion.

However, Berengar decided to get up from his relaxed position and head for the door where he opened it, much to the chagrin of Adela, who pouted where she was kneeling. After opening the door, he was scowling at Ava which immediately frightened her, especially after the conversation she had with her father.

However, Ava swallowed her pride and immediately bowed her head in reverence before apologizing.

"I am truly sorry for what I did; I hope that you can forgive my husband and me for our actions!"

Berengar merely scoffed at her reaction; she picked a horrible time to apologize, all she managed to do was torment him further by interrupting his heavenly lap pillow! At this moment, Ava noticed Adela was in his room, and she recognized that she might have been interrupting something important. Especially when she considered the way the two looked at her.

However, she was already here and had spoiled the mood, so she might as well get this over with; as such, Berengar looked at her indifferently before sighing heavily.

"Whatever, we are family, so I will let it slide just this once, but you and your husband owe me for being so benevolent!"

Hearing Berengar's command instantly sent shivers down Ava's spine as she recollected herself before nodding in agreement to Berengar.

"Sure, whatever we can do to help, we will gladly repay this favor!"

After agreeing, Berengar shooed the woman away; he no longer wanted to be around her.

"If that is all, leave us!"

Seeing that Adela was giving her a deathly glare, and Berengar was no different, Ava quickly bowed before running off into the distance. After doing so, Berengar shut the door and returned to Adela, where he had a smile on his face, before asking Adela the question on his mind.

"Now... where were we?"

Upon witnessing the grin on Berengar's face, Adela's cheeks flushed in embarrassment before she muttered.

"Just this once!"

Seeing that the girl had accepted, Berengar immediately hopped back into the lap pillow, where he quickly fell asleep. After dozing off, Adela merely stared down at his sleeping face lovingly before kissing him on the forehead.

"Sweet dreams!"

#### *Chapter 186: An Important Announcement During a Lovely Dinner*

Several hours had passed, and Berengar awoke to the soft sensation of the silk dress that covered Adela's thighs, even she had fallen asleep during this time as he rested in her lap pillow. However, it was merely a power nap and not an actual night's rest; as such, Berengar continued to enjoy himself until the moment his fiancée awoke from her slumber.

After a few moments, Adela quietly opened her eyes, where Berengar pretended to be still asleep, realizing that it was nearing time for dinner; Adela began to pet her future husband's golden hair with a smile on her face.

"Wake up, sleepyhead! It is almost time for dinner."

Being already awake, Berengar was smiling at the loving gesture of Adela before he pretended to wake up slowly. He honestly wished he could enjoy this moment a little longer. However, all good things must come to an end. Thus Berengar rose from the lap pillow and rubbed his eyes.

"How long was I out for?"

Adela, who was also asleep, shook her head as she revealed what she knew.

"I don't know, I also fell asleep, but it must have been a few hours; look at the sun; it has already begun to set!"

Berengar and Adela immediately shifted their view towards the window, which revealed a beautiful sky filled with fluffy clouds; it appeared to be the perfect blend of orange and blue. The sight of which instantly spurred feelings of romance in every couple who stared at its brilliance together, Berengar and Adela were no exception.

However, they could not enjoy its beauty for long, shortly after, they heard a knock at the door, followed by one of the servants announcing that the time for dinner had arrived.

"Berengar, it is dinner time; Count Otto has requested your presence."

Hearing such news, Berengar got up from his position on the ground and offered a helping hand to Adela. The adolescent girl quickly latched onto it, where Berengar dragged the girl from her knees and into his arms before petting her on the head.

"I suppose it is time to eat."

Adela stuffed her head into Berengar's chest before muttering in a low voice.

"yeah..."

Afterward, Berengar opened the door, and the servant was already gone; as such, he and Adela inched towards the dining hall while holding hands. When they finally arrived, they realized that they were the last to do so, and as such, quickly sat down in their seats so that the meal no longer waited upon them.

After being brought the dishes for the night, the group said the Lord's prayer before dining into their meals. Otto was aware of the trouble that Ava had caused, but he was not yet aware that she had adequately apologized. As for Wolfgang, he glared menacingly at Berengar, and yet Berengar paid no heed to his malicious gaze.

Ava was quite worried; even though Berengar had claimed he accepted her apology, she had no idea what kind of favor he may ask of her in the future; because of her fear of the unknown, she seldom looked toward's Berengar and Adela's direction.

As for Berengar and Adela, they were smiling happily, like a loving couple on their honeymoon. They had squashed their relationship problems before they turned into something serious, and as such, were in exceptionally high spirits on this fine evening.

The Countess noticed Adela's good mood and quickly commented on it, with a charming smile on her face.

"You two seem to be unusually happy this evening. Did something happen between you two?"

Count Otto was also quite curious; as far as he was aware earlier in the day, Ava had seemed to cause a severe rift between the young couple, but now they were chatting and giggling like a couple of teenage brats who were in love for the first time in their lives.? Well, he supposed for Adela that was most certainly the case, Berengar on the other hand, not so much.

Most curious of all was the eldest son and heir of Count Otto, Gerhart, who had since Berengar's arrival gone out of his way to avoid the man. After all, he had caused quite the controversy when he tried to break Berengar and Adela's betrothal, so much so that he was no longer on speaking terms with his youngest sister.

Ultimately Adela was the one who spoke up about her current state of affection for her future husband.

"You could say Berengar and I have come to an understanding..."

The teenage girl knew how to leave things cryptic; it was a great way to infuriate Gerhart and Ava. She was not above causing some trouble of her own, which caused Count Otto to frown. He knew Adela was now striking back at her siblings. However, he did not blame her for doing so; after all, she had previously been put in a difficult position by the two of them.

Gerhart scowled when he heard this; he still did not approve of his lecherous, and cruel cousin grooming his lovely little sister. However, it was not his decision to make, and his father had already made that abundantly clear.

As for Adela's other brother, Heimerich, he was smiling at the whole affair. He greatly admired Berengar's accomplishments and supported creating a long-lasting relationship with his cousin, especially since he knew of Berengar's reforms, and was hoping that when the young man became Duke, he would allow noble houses to implement such succession laws if they so wished, which would enable him to contend for the succession of his father, with his foolish brother Gerhart. Thus Heimerich was the first to comment on Adela's statement.

"Whatever it is, I am glad to see you two getting along so well. I wish the two of you great happiness in your future!"

Gerhart and Ava snarled at this response, but Count Otto and his wife Wanda were pleased by Heimerich's comments. The boy looked more and more like successor material; it was just a shame that he was the second son instead of the first. Heimerich was not as cruel as Lambert and would never make an attempt on his brother's life, but he would undoubtedly do his best to usurp his position in any other way.

Berengar was smiling as he dug into his meal, with a smile on his charming face. He was incredibly pleased that he could enjoy such a level of cooking, even across the Duchy. His cultural changes were beginning to affect more than just Tyrol. After washing it down with some light beer, he decided to make an announcement. As such, he gathered everyone's attention by clanging his spoon on his chalice.

After everyone gazed over at him, Berengar smiled gracefully before letting everyone know his decision.

"I have decided to announce it here, but I will be departing tomorrow morning, back to Tyrol. Though I am incredibly thankful for the hospitality you have shown me and the time that I have spent with you all. I have many important matters to attend to, and unfortunately, I can't dwell here any longer. I just wanted to thank you all for allowing me to stay here these past few days!"

When Adela heard this, she began to pout; after all, she and Berengar had just settled their differences and were starting to spend time together. However, she understood Berengar had many matters to oversee, and as such, she could not monopolize him.

As for Count Otto, he was aware of the plans Berengar had in place; in a few days, Conrad would be arriving in Kufstein, and Berengar needed to be there to greet the boy and cement his power. After Berengar made an announcement, Otto made one of his own.

"I will also be traveling with Berengar to Kufstein; there is a matter of great importance that he and I must attend to. Adela, if you would like to come with us, you may. As for who is in charge during my absence, I will pass that responsibility to Gerhart. Do not disappoint me like last time!"

The expressions around the table varied greatly. Adela was pleased, as she not only got to spend more time with Berengar, but she could finally see his baby boy with her own eyes. Despite herself not being the mother, she felt a great desire to see what his offspring would look like and to get close to him early on.

As for Gerhart, he was exceptionally thrilled that he was being given another chance; he had thoroughly screwed up his last stint as Regent, so much that his position was stripped and given to Heimerich during the remaining duration.

Heimerich on the other hand was scowling; he was confident that he would be left in command the next time his father departed for an extended period. Yet, the position was given to his elder brother once more. He supposed he would be the one tasked with leading the armies, which was fair; after all, he was far more capable in that regard than Gerhart.

Ava and her husband were glad that Berengar would be departing; his presence was a constant reminder of his Tyranny and the ever-increasing fear they felt for their actions. Ava had informed Wolfgang not to annoy further Berengar and the reasons for doing so. He may be dull, but he was also a coward and knew when to fear the mighty.

Ultimately Berengar smiled at this result; not only would he be able to spend more time with Adela, but Otto was personally visiting Kufstein to greet Conrad and form the resistance against the Bavarian occupation of Austria. Three Counts would meet in Kufstein where they would convince Conrad to declare Berengar as Regent, then he would possess all the authority of a Duke.

First, he would drive the Bavarians from Austria; then, he would implement his reforms across the entire Duchy while building a great navy! After all, with all of Austria under his command, he would finally have access to the Adriatic Sea, and by extension the Mediterranean. Once this goal was achieved Berengar could finally send expeditions to the new world! Soon enough, his life's goal of gaining potatoes would become a reality!

#### *Chapter 187: Returning to Kufstein*

The evening came and went, and Berengar ultimately returned to the room provided for him where he retired for the night. After sleeping well, he awoke early in the morning and began making preparations for the journey to Kufstein.

It was not long before he was standing outside the Castle in its courtyard, waiting for Adela and Otto to arrive. Eventually, Adela and Otto presented themselves, where they greeted Berengar. They had already said their farewells to their family, as it would be a while before they returned. Otto was the first to voice his concerns over the journey.

"Berengar, are you certain that we will be safe traveling through Salzburg and into Kufstein?"

Hearing Otto voice his worries, Berengar nearly chuckled; he had with him a sufficient amount of Cuirassiers and Mounted Infantry who he had explicitly raised to guard his caravan. He had been spending an enormous expense lately purchasing as many warhorses as possible from various parts of Europe.

While His cavalry was made up of primarily Cuirassiers and Lancers, he still made efforts to raise Mounted Infantry for rapid excursions or protecting him during his travels. Thus at present, his forces were sufficient to pierce through the County of Salzburg with little effort.

As such, Berengar informed Count Otto of his certainty.

"Do not worry, uncle, my Cuirassiers and Mounted infantry are more than enough to defeat any force that is foolish enough to attack us on our route to Kufstein. We will be perfectly safe."

Hearing Berengar's confidence on the issue greatly dissuaded his concerns, and such he nodded his head in agreement.

"I hope you are right..."

With that said, Count Otto was the first to step into the Carriage that Berengar had provided. After her father had done so, Adela approached Berengar and wrapped her arms around his neck before pecking him on the cheek.

It had been so long since she had been in Kufstein, and she was filled with anticipation, she had dreamed of revisiting, ever since she read the letters of Berengar's construction efforts. After kissing Berengar on the cheek, the teenage girl blushed before grabbing onto his hand.

"Shall we go?"

Berengar smiled and nodded before dragging his future wife into the carriage, where he then gave the order to depart. Thus the caravan of armed guards and Berengar's host were effectively on the march as they began to leave the City of Graz. At an average speed of fifteen miles per hour, it would take the caravan roughly fourteen hours to reach their destination. During this time, Adela and Berengar flirted for the most part, which made Count Otto deeply uncomfortable.

...

After a little over fourteen hours had passed, Berengar and his caravan arrived at the borders of the city of Kufstein. Their journey was uneventful, as the Bavarians occupying Salzburg had already learned their lesson from the last time they targeted Berengar's caravan and thus kept their distance in fear of once more sustaining massive casualties.



Seeing the great walls of the city of Kufstein in the distance, Adela peeked her head out the window with awe. Such marvelous structures did not exist during her last visit to the region. She had read in great detail about Berengar's infrastructure projects from his letters. Still, upon witnessing them with her own eyes, she felt as if even the legendary Theodosian walls of Constantinople could not compare.

Even Count Otto stared with amazement at the grand structures; he was specifically drawn to the grey bricks used in their construction and inquired about their composition.

"Berengar, just what exactly are these walls made out of?"

Berengar had an arrogant smile on his face as he described the materials the walls were constructed with while exuding an overwhelming aura of pride.

"Well, for starters, we take cinder blocks, which are semi-hollow bricks made out of concrete. From there, we fill the gaps with structural steel reinforcing bars or rebar for short. Then after the cinder blocks are properly reinforced, we pour more cement inside the gaps to seal them shut, and secure the rebar within. The steel-reinforced bricks are then stacked together until the proper thickness of the walls is achieved. This is just a summary of how we build such structures. In reality, it is far more complex. However, as you can see, the walls are shorter and far thicker than ordinary castle walls. This is to maintain structural integrity if my enemies were to bring cannon fire onto my city. Something that traditional walls have proven to be weak against during my campaigns."

Count Otto was trying to register everything that Berengar had said while gazing in awe at the fortifications surrounding Kufstein's city. He quickly realized anyone who decided to launch an attack on such a well-defended city was merely asking for their death.

Soon enough, the caravan entered the city gates, which opened upon seeing the banners of House von Kufstein flying above the approaching caravan. With it, Berengar and his guests entered into a city the likes they had never seen before.

While the outer areas closest to the walls were currently unoccupied, the closer they approached the center, the more they saw magnificent tenements and houses constructed in the half-timber style. There was no sign of filth in the streets as each building had its internal plumbing, which flowed to a sewage treatment plant outside of the city, then pumped into the nearby river Inn.

However, what captured Adela's sight were the massive projects that were either undergoing construction or already completed. Such as the Grand Cathedral, the Grand Palace, and the parliamentary buildings. These buildings were all made in a unique architectural style that had yet to enter this world. They were beautiful compared to the other structures of the era and easily caught Adela's interest.

It had been over half a year since she was last in Kufstein, and yet it had changed so much. It was genuinely unfathomable how quickly Berengar had built his city. Still, he relied on a large workforce and the advanced technologies of structural steel and concrete to build the city so rapidly.

Even the gorgeous half-timbered tenements and homes were built using concrete instead of more traditional materials, especially for their foundations. Of course, the concrete was covered in stucco to make it more aesthetically pleasing. Thus the buildings hardly looked any different from the more traditional buildings built in such a style across Germany.

It was only after entering the city square where Adela saw the monument dedicated to Berengar overlooking the city from the hill above it. She could not help but gasp as she saw the massive bronze statue of her fiance on horseback, fully dressed in armor and raising his sword in the air. Berengar saw the adorable expression on her face and immediately asked her the question on his mind.

"Magnificent, isn't it?"

Adela was so shocked at the level of craftsmanship that she had no words and merely nodded with her mouth agape. Seeing Adela's reaction, he was more than happy with the expense he had paid for such a thing.

On the other hand, Count Otto was deeply envious of the city Berengar had created; it appeared to be a fitting place for the Capital of an Empire, he had no words, for how much he desired Graz to be rebuilt in such a fashion. In the end, he could only sigh in defeat; Berengar's wealth and knowledge were too much for an older man like him to compete with.

After traversing through the city, they finally crossed the river and ended up in the castle courtyard where Linde and Henrietta were waiting for his arrival. Henrietta was holding Hans in her arms, which Berengar instantly realized the reason when he saw it.

As such, he stepped out of the carriage intending to inform Linde to behave herself in the presence of Adela and her father, but he was a moment too slow; before he could even get off the steps, Linde had jumped into his arms and kissed him passionately, forcing her tongue through his lips, while hanging her arms his neck. She used her natural assets to press into Berengar's chest and tried to suck the air out of his lungs.

Only when Adela and Count Otto followed Berengar out of the carriage did Linde realize she had made a mistake. The way Adela glared at her instantly sent shivers down her spine, and thus she quickly released her hold over Berengar before turning away in embarrassment.

On the other hand, Otto was observing his daughter's reaction to Berengar openly displaying his affection for another woman; Despite the fact that Adela had said she was okay with it; she had never personally witnessed her fiance be intimate with another woman. Surprisingly she handled it quite well.

It was only after Linde recovered her senses did she properly greet Berengar.

"I missed you so much, darling!"

Adela's brow instantly raised as she heard the pet name that Linde used when referring to Berengar. Of course, if Linde were in private with Berengar, she would use the term "master" when addressing her lover, but she commonly referred to him as dear or darling in public. Hearing the two were so familiar, Adela began to pout.

Linde noticed this and quickly shifted her attention to Adela, who greeted her in a friendly manner.

"It has been a long time, little Adela; I look forward to your stay; we have much to talk about."

Though they had been corresponding with letters to one another, the two had not had a proper discussion on how to divide Berengar's attention face to face, and thus they would need to negotiate appropriately as such; Adela put on a smile and nodded at Linde's statement.

"We sure do..."

Berengar could tell the situation was tense and, as such tried to lighten the mood.

"We can talk about these things further when we are inside."

Before his daughter could break out into a fight with Linde over Berengar's affection, Count Otto agreed to his nephew's suggestion and hurried his daughter along. Such a conversation was better to be had behind closed doors.

"I agree, come, Adela, let us get settled into our lodgings."

Though Adela did not want to leave Berengar's company too soon, she realized Linde deserved some alone time with the man, and thus she nodded before following her father into the Castle while the servants brought in their luggage.

As for Henrietta, she followed Adela inside and began to chat with her; she still held onto the infant Hans, which Adela was more than happy to spend time with. After all, this was Berengar's son, and as such, she felt some form of connection to the boy, even if he was not her child.

Seeing that the two were alone, Linde embraced Berengar before tracing her finger around his well-toned chest.

"Now that we have some time to ourselves, what should we do?"

Berengar chuckled and petted her head before whispering in her ear

"I know a few things we can do..."

With that, the couple fled to the bedroom to get reacquainted while Adela and her father settled into the lodgings that they were provided for their duration in Kufstein. Soon enough, Berengar would be marching to war once more, and he wanted to spend as much time with his two women as possible.

### *Chapter 188: Settling In*

After Berengar and Linde were properly reacquainted, they redressed themselves and left their chambers, where they proceeded to greet Adela and Otto. Otto was chatting with Liutbert, who was Berengar's chancellor and had traveled to Kufstein, the seat of power in Tyrol, to conduct Berengar's affairs while he was away.

Adela was hanging out with Henrietta and Hans, playing with the infant child in his room. Seeing Adela look so affectionately at Hans as if he were her own child brought a smile to Linde's lips. She was frightened over the possibility that Adela would hate her child and try to get rid of him. Yet, instead, she was treating the boy as a member of her own family.

Berengar watched as Linde walked over to her little boy and picked him up, and clutched the boy to her mighty bosom. Seeing his two women and his little sister get along so well pleased Berengar; it was an endearing sight to behold. Thus Berengar merely watched the show for some time.

After a while, Hans was put to bed, and Berengar brought the girls away from the room so that he could adequately sleep. Adela had a giant smile on her face as she conversed with Linde about her child.

"Hans is so cute! He has Berengar's eyes and your hair; he is so perfect!"

Linde smiled at Adela's compliment and hugged Adela tightly as if they were sisters.

"I bet when you and Berengar have your own son, he will turn out just like his father!"

Berengar did not want to ruin the moment, but seeing Adela's cheeks flushed with embarrassment from the compliment while nearly suffocating in Linde's mighty cleavage was too funny of a scene. He struggled to prevent himself from laughing at the way the two girls were behaving. Nevertheless, through superior willpower, he maintained his composure and merely smiled endearingly at them.

At this moment, Linde noticed something peculiar and grabbed ahold of Adela's chest to confirm her suspicion, which caused the girl's face to flush to a new degree as she broke away from Linde's grasp and covered her growing bust with her arms. Linde had a wicked grin on her face as she openly proclaimed her findings.

"Adela, you have grown! We should take a bath together and compare sizes!"

Feeling embarrassed by such a discovery, Adela wanted to hide in a corner; however, with Berengar watching, she refused to back down and thus surprisingly made a bold statement of her own as she proudly displayed her chest to Linde.

"You just watch; one day, I will be bigger than you!"

Linde laughed lightly at the young girls' challenge and approached her closely before whispering in her ear.

"Maybe, but that will take years, and until you grow up, Berengar is all mine!"

Adela immediately began to pout as she heard Linde's words; she knew exactly what Linde meant and was greatly envious of her. However, she was underaged, and there was nothing she could do about that; all she could do was sulk in defeat.

Berengar had seen enough and awkwardly coughed before declaring his next move.

"You all enjoy yourselves; I'm going to go find Count Otto and see what he is up to."

With that, he quickly fled before the girls could keep him; if he had to witness their rowdy actions any longer, he might very well lose his mind. Thus Berengar wandered through the Castle until he found Liutbert and Otto in the dining hall sampling the beer Berengar's breweries had produced.

Berengar quickly sat down at the head of the table and ordered one of the nearby servants.

"Fetch me my chalice and a flagon of doppelbock beer!"

The servant did not dare disobey the mighty Count of Tyrol and quickly nodded before going off to do as instructed. Liutbert and Otto could tell Berengar was flustered and were instantly interested in what had happened; ultimately, Otto was the first to ask.

"So, how are the girls?"

Berengar sighed deeply before being brutally honest in his reply.

"They are about to take a bath so that they can compare sizes..."

Count Otto and Liutbert were already sufficiently intoxicated at this point and gazed at each other before returning their sights to Berengar. Liutbert was the first to speak his mind.

"Tsk... Lucky bastard!"

Count Otto, on the other hand, immediately broke out into laughter before expressing his thoughts.

"That daughter of mine, she acts all high and mighty, but in reality, she is on quite good terms with your lover, isn't she? It seems that I have nothing to worry about! Don't worry, Berengar; if she is anything like her sisters, she will grow up to have a body that is equal to that redhaired lass of yours!"

Berengar was quite shocked that Count Otto was speaking in such a way about his daughter; then again, he had never witnessed the man drunk before. Clearly, He could not handle his liquor, and for a beer, the Doppelbock that they were drinking was quite strong, with eight percent alcohol content.

Eventually, the servant arrived with Berengar's skull chalice and a flagon of his favorite wine, which Berengar unhesitantly poured into his goblet before taking a swig. This was the first time Count Otto and Viscount Liutbert witnessed what Berengar had done to Lambert's skull and were quite shocked by the results.

Though the chalice was made from the skull of another human being, it was dipped in gold and encrusted in finely cut black garnet, the shaft of the chalice that one used to grip was perfectly embedded in the bottom of the skull, as if the entire piece was carved out of one solid block of gold. They hardly believed such barbarity could be so sophisticated.

As Berengar drank from the skull chalice, he noticed the looks he was given, and Count Otto was the first to voice his thoughts aloud.

"Is that... you know?"

Berengar nodded his head silently with an indifferent expression on his face. After he did so, Liutbert was the next one to speak.

"Does your family know?"

Berengar shook his head in response before gulping down the remainder of the contents in his beer, he quickly poured more into his chalice before responding.

"As far as they're aware that little bastard is still alive and fighting the Golden Horde, I have been meaning to fabricate a letter from the Teutonic Order informing them of his glorious death. I would rather spare my family the pain of knowing that cunt came back to Kufstein in an attempt to kill us all..."

Count Otto nodded his head in approval; if he were in a similar situation, he would probably lie to his family to spare their feelings as well. After all, the revelation of Lambert's initial actions sent Sieghard into a state of acute depression, so much so that he left Berengar in charge of the realm until the old Viscount finally surrendered his position. He could only imagine the pain his brother-in-law would go through, knowing that his son returned with an army for revenge.



After thinking it through, the older Count decided to change the subject to something less grim and instead asked about the upcoming plans.

"So when will Conrad arrive?"

Berengar pondered about it for a moment before giving a rough estimate he had received.

"It could be as early as tomorrow, but it could also be at the latest in three days. It honestly depends on how many stops the trade Caravan he is hiding in makes before they arrive in Kufstein."

Count Otto nodded and looked at the dark beer that filled his goblet before nodding in approval.

"Good, I would not mind a few more days of drinking such a hearty beer; how did you come up with this?"

Berengar chuckled; he too was fond of the beer they were currently drinking, and as such, he gave the Count some optimistic news.

"I can give you the recipe for it, but it can take up to a year before such a beer is ready to drink."

Count Otto's eyes instantly shined when he heard the news, and he nearly pounced at Berengar before calming himself down and reseating himself.

"Name your price!"

Unexpectedly Berengar merely shook his head in response and gave the man the best news he had heard in weeks.

"Consider it a gift; just make sure to treat me to some of the finished product the next time I find myself in your territory!"

Count Otto gave Berengar a thumbs up with a giant smile on his face.

"Deal!"

Liutbert, on the other hand, was already in the process of brewing his own batch of the tasty beer. After all, Berengar had already begun to export his cuisine and brewery recipes across the entirety of Tyrol. As such, he did not need the recipe; he merely smiled at Otto; luckily, this man was Berengar's relative and could thus acquire some benefits such as this for free.

Thus Berengar and the other two men spent the remainder of their night drinking and talking about important matters of the realm. Meanwhile, Adela and Linde were currently in the bath, negotiating how best to divide Berengar's attention. All the while, Conrad inched closed to Kufstein, and when he finally arrived, Berengar would quickly find himself forced into the throes of war once more; after all, peace was never eternal.

### *Chapter 189: Bombard*

While Berengar and the others were settling into Kufstein after their long journey, Eckhard was busy acting as the commander of the border forces stationed at Kitzbühel; he had been overseeing the defense of the northeastern borders of Tyrol since he was first deployed to the region. Unlike the Northwest front, which had devolved into a stalemate, where the attackers refused to advance.

The commander of the Northeast Bavarian Army constantly threw men at the walls of the Star Fortress. However, no matter what they attempted to do, it ultimately met in failure. At the moment, Eckhard was inside one of the buildings constructed inside the fort that acted as an HQ for the officers who manned its garrison.

Currently, Eckhard was conversing with the officers under his command about the constant threat outside their border. A well-armored officer dressed in a three-quarter plate was the first to speak up about the current situation.

"If they keep attacking at such a pace, we will eventually run out of munitions. The next resupply from Kufstein is still a week out. Someone needs to inform Berengar that we are running out of munitions and to expedite the delivery!"

By now, thousands of bodies lie riddled with bullets, and shrapnel outside the fort, rotting in the area strictly labeled by the enemy army as the "kill zone." Anything that entered the area would be battered by musket fire and artillery barrages. It was indeed a nightmare to get past.

Eckhard nodded his head in agreement as he took a sip from his mug, which was filled with beer. If there was one thing Berengar had made sure while he was recovering from his injury and attending to matters of the state, it was that his troops were well supplied with high-quality rations. It was only after the grizzled veteran had quenched his parched throat with the delectable taste of Oktoberfest beer that he began to speak his piece.

"We will send a carrier pigeon to Kufstein to ensure that the shipment of our munitions and other supplies will be expedited. As for the situation at the border itself, how are we doing?"

Another officer, who was roughly the same age as Eckhard and had been a Knight of Kufstein for many years, quickly began his account of the ongoing efforts to defend the border.

"A patrol recently caught a unit of men at arms no greater than 250 trying to cross through the mountains and into Kufstein. They were most likely tasked with sabotage. However, they were effectively gunned down by our patrols before they could do any damage. As for the walls themselves, they are holding. The enemy cannot harm our fortress, at least not at the moment!"

Eckhard nodded in silence. Aside from running low on supplies, there was not much to worry about when it came to the defense of the Northeast border of Tyrol. However, for whatever reason, Eckhard felt a nagging suspicion in the back of his mind that the Bavarians were going to try something drastic. Thus he gave his officers an order before concluding the meeting.

"Double the nightly watch and the ongoing patrols; I do not want any Bavarians slipping past our border!"

The officers all saluted Eckhard by pounding their steel breastplates with their fists before answering in the affirmative.

"Yes, sir!"

with that, Eckhard turned his back on them and gave one final order for the night.

"Dismissed!"

Hearing their orders, the men finally departed from the fort's HQ and were set upon their tasks. As for Eckhard, he stared at the map in front of him and pondered about the actions that the Bavarians might take. The number of men they threw at his wall was unbelievable; despite setback after setback, they still attacked at regular intervals. They were doing this in an attempt to lower his guard, but he did not know what for.

Ultimately Eckhard sighed before he decided to give up on predicting the enemy's plan; he would never be able to guess what devious plot the Bavarians were up to; he would do best to adapt when such a scheme reared its ugly head. As such, he left the HQ and entered his quarters, where he climbed into his cot and slept peacefully for the night.

...

Hours had passed, and it was roughly midnight; the new moon in the sky provided excellent cover for the Bavarian's latest plot to break through the mighty star fortress. Since they could not pierce through its defenses during the day, they had been wasting men's lives over the past few weeks at regular intervals to lower the guard of their opponent.

Now the time had come for them to unleash the plot that they had long since planned for. Under the cover of darkness, Bavarian soldiers slowly moved the horses into position, keeping the creatures calm to the best of their ability.

The carts the horses dragged behind them carried large, iron tubes, which resembled primitive cannons. However, unlike the 12 and 24 lb artillery that Berengar's forces used, these massive cannons fired large stone balls that were bigger than most men's torsos.

Slowly but surely, the devices known as Bombards made their way into firing position where they were set up, entirely shrouded by the lack of illumination which this particular night provided. During the loading process, one of the large stone balls fell from the cannon's mouth and crashed on the ground, creating a loud thud.

One of the soldiers instantly scolded the man who had screwed up the loading procedure in a hushed tone.

"Fool! You are going to alert the Tyroleans!"

However, after several seconds, it became apparent that the guards on the walls nearby did not notice the commotion. As such, the men sighed before restarting the loading procedure. In total, there were three of these monumental devices. It was all that Duke Dietger could afford; he had not even brought such masterpieces to Vienna. Yet here at the Borders of Tyrol against a small star fortress, the Bavarians were forced to unleash their mightiest weapon.

Eventually, the Cannons were lit, and after several seconds a loud thunderous noise echoed in the air before the massive stone cannonballs found their way into the fortress walls. The Bavarian army began to cheer outside the walls as they believed such a small bombardment was fully capable of dealing significant damage to the Tyrolean walls.

However, when the dust settled, all that such a thing managed to accomplish was alert the Tyrolean defenders, who rapidly climbed to their positions where they began to load their 24 lb siege cannons and aim them at the bombardments. When the Bavarian commander gazed at the wall sections only to realize that they were still mostly intact his jaw dropped.

The man had no way of knowing that the low and thick walls of a star fortress were explicitly designed to mitigate the destructive power of cannons. Since these walls were made of steel-reinforced concrete bricks, they were far more resilient than anything outside Tyrol.

Eckhard quickly rushed out of bed and entered the scene, where he saw his men rapidly loading the 24 lb guns mounted on the walls. When he arrived, they quickly stopped what they were doing and saluted the man before waiting for the Field Marshal to speak.

Eckhard quickly assessed the damage before a wicked grin formed on his face.

"Show these fools what real artillery bombardment looks like!"

The Tyrolean defenders quickly responded with a salute and the battle cry they were so well known for.

"God with us!"

Afterward, the 24 lb cannons that were mounted in the direction of the bombards were fired, and a dozen of 24 lb explosive shells landed upon the bombards, destroying the devices and shredding the fools who had marched right into the kill zone.

However, the battle did not end there, as the cannons were rapidly reloaded and fired once more, this time aimed at the siege camp the Bavarians had foolishly erected within firing range of the mighty artillery that Berengar's forces possessed.

Until now, they had been fighting a war of attrition, but Eckhard was fully aware of Berengar's ongoing plans and had decided to wipe out the army who approached the Northeastern border on this night. He was thoroughly outraged that the fools would bring cannons against him. As such, he wanted to teach the Bavarians a valuable lesson about who the true master of artillery was!

Thus the Tyrolean defenders retaliated and began to bombard the Enemy encampment throughout the entirety of the night. Blood-curdling screams filled the air, alongside the sounds of explosions detonating upon the enemy position. As the enemy commander gazed upon the destruction of his encampment, he quickly saw a projectile heading straight for him and cursed under his breath.

"God damn it..."

with that, the shell landed on top of him, and the explosive blast engulfed his figure, rendering him into nothing more than mincemeat. The thunderous echoes of a dozen cannons would continue to fire off throughout the night, long after the Bavarian Army had been utterly destroyed.

### *Chapter 190: Dreadfully Hungover*

During the night that Eckhard had obliterated the Bavarian army tasked with assaulting the Northeast border, Berengar had gotten quite intoxicated conversing with Duke Otto and Liutbert, so much so that Adela was currently scowling at her father, blaming him for Berengar's current state.

"Father, why are you such a poor influence on Berengar! He should not be drinking so much!"

Berengar was entertained by the fact that he was not scolded for his actions, but his future wife had laid the blame entirely on her father. It just showed that Count Otto must have had a habit of overdrinking.

As for Liutbert, he was also being given the scornful look of a displeased young woman by his younger sister. She knew that Berengar was expecting an important guest to arrive, possibly within the next day. Thus, she was displeased by Berengar's actions; however, she held her brother responsible considering he too had drinking problems.

Berengar was usually a responsible drinker; he liked the taste of beer and had a high tolerance to alcohol. Thus he was rarely exceptionally drunk, nor was he often hungover. However, the three men were in terrible condition at the moment.

While Linde and Adela had an important conversation in the bath, these men had been drinking, and they had consumed no small amount from the way it appeared. Ultimately Linde voiced her concerns as well.

"Liutbert, as Chancellor, you should know better than to drink to such excess, especially taking into consideration that you roped Berengar into your mess!"

Berengar was enjoying the sight of the two men getting scolded; however, as Count, he had to protect the reputation of his subordinates. Thus he began to speak. However, the moment he did so, his words started to slur, despite himself not recognizing such a thing.

"Lin..dela... I'm erm... fine! I'm fine! I can still... drink!"

Seeing that Berengar could no longer complete a proper sentence, Linde simply walked over to him and grabbed ahold of his shoulder, helping him up from his chair.

"Darling, it is time to get some rest. There is an important guest who might be arriving tomorrow, and you need to be in proper shape!"

Though Berengar wanted to deny that he was drunk, the moment he stepped up, he began to wobble, and eventually, his legs gave out from under him, causing him to fall over onto Linde, dragging her onto the floor with him.

The way that Berengar had landed was with his face pressed into Linde's substantial bust, which caused quite the scene. The two other drunk men began to cheer for Berengar, with Count Otto being the first to compliment him.

"That's my boy!"

The moment Adela heard her father say such an outrageous thing, she lashed out at him verbally.

"Father! Don't encourage such uncouth behavior!"

As for Liutbert, he began pouring another drink as he cheered for Berengar

"Show my sister who is boss!"

Hearing such words, Linde instantly became furious at her brother and gave him a chilling stare which immediately silenced the man. As for Berengar, he was in no condition to get up and merely nuzzled his head further into Linde's mighty cleavage. He was completely unaware of what he said next.

"So soft..."

Linde quickly realized that Berengar was attempting to use her breasts as a pillow and immediately began to blush in embarrassment.

"Darling, not in public..."

Seeing that Linde was starting to become excited from the humiliating display, Adela instantly became sickened by the inappropriate scene in front of her. She quickly stormed over to Berengar's side, where she proceeded to help him up and off of Linde.

It was only after both women supported Berengar that he was dragged off and into his quarters. After reaching his room, the two girls helped him onto the



bed, where Linde wiped the sweat from her brow; she was not used to such heavy lifting.

"Thanks, Adela; I will take it from here!"

Realizing what the young woman was talking about, Adela instantly began to blush and nodded her head. Though she was curious, she knew it was inappropriate for her to stay any further, and thus she quickly fled the scene.

It was only after Adela shut the doors behind her that Linde began to lick her lips in excitement. She quickly stripped him of his clothes and then her own before climbing into bed with her lover, where she dragged his face over to her bare chest before stroking his hair lightly.

Berengar, who was barely conscious, instantly noticed the softness and once more used Linde's chest as a pillow; now that they were alone, Linde did not care how Berengar used her body; as such, she clutched her lover to her breast as if she was feeding her child and quickly fell asleep alongside him.

...

Hours passed, and the light of dawn rose in the sky, yet Berengar was still sleeping; it was unusual for him to slumber for such an extended period. However, after drinking to the excessive degree that he had done the night before, he managed to sleep in until noon.

When he finally opened his eyes, he saw that he was being held tightly to Linde's chest, who was asleep next to him; unlike Berengar, Linde could sleep in as long as she desired, even while sober. Since she had no inclination to end this harmonious scene so early, she continued to rest alongside her lover.

The beautiful young woman opened her eyes and taunted Berengar after he had finally forced himself out of her cleavage.

"You sure had fun last night!"

Berengar had no recollection of the night before. Instead, his head was pounding as if it was repeatedly slammed with a four-pound sledge. Thus he struggled to regain his clarity as he listened to Linde's provocation. After concluding the events that transpired the previous night, he ultimately decided to ask the woman.

"Ugh, what the hell did I do last night?"

Linde merely crossed her arms and sneered at him with pity

"You drank a lot, and then you continued to drink until finally, you could no longer stand. Adela and I had to drag you back to our room. If I had known that by leaving you alone with my idiot brother, and Adela's alcoholic father that you would drink to the point of passing out, I wouldn't have spent so long in the bath with Adela..."

Berengar's memories were starting to return to him, to the point where he remembered several embarrassing scenes from the night before. Eventually, he got out of his bed and put on his luxurious clothes, where Linde followed suit, the entire time, she had a mocking expression on her face. She could tell by the way he was behaving that he was in severe pain at the moment, and she felt it was well deserved for acting like an idiot.

Eventually, Linde had to help Berengar get dressed because despite resting for a solid twelve hours, he still felt dizzy from the amount he had drunk the night prior. After some time, the couple made their way to the dining hall, where Count Otto and Liutbert were sitting with equally miserable expressions. Luckily they too were severely lacking in their mental faculties and could hardly remember how foolish they had acted the night before.

Berengar sat down at the table and immediately made a request to the staff who attended to his needs.

"Bring me a pitcher of milk!"

The servant looked at him with an odd expression before confirming

"A whole pitcher? Are you sure you would not like to start with a chalice?"

Berengar held his head in the palm of both of his hands as he lightly raked his fingers across his eye and eyepatch before confirming his request.

"Yes, a whole pitcher, you can forget the damn chalice!"

The servant was shocked at how Berengar snapped at her. Usually, he was so friendly. He must have had quite the night last night. Berengar seldom got drunk to the point of being hungover, but he turned exceptionally impatient and nasty when such a thing occurred. Thus the servant quickly went to the kitchen to fetch a milk pitcher before returning and handing it to Berengar, where she proceeded to inquire about her next task.

"Does your excellency require anything further?"

Berengar did not even need to think about it and quickly gave his response.

"Toast, over-easy eggs, and a side of bacon. Make it quick!"

The servant quickly nodded before running off to the kitchen to inform them of Berengar's request. Berengar's hangover cure usually consisted of coffee with milk in it, toast, and eggs, and some form of meat. However, at the moment, he did not have access to coffee; it would be some time before such a thing naturally made its way into Europe. At the moment, he greatly desired to sail an expedition around the Cape of Good Hope and into the Horn of Africa, where he could colonize Ethiopia so he could seize their massive coffee forests for himself.

As for the rest of the people present at the table, they were either as miserable as he was, or they were gloating at the foolishness of men. Regardless, Berengar had important matters to attend to on this day, and he desperately needed to shape up before Conrad's potential arrival.