

## Steel 48

### *Chapter 48: Gathering Evidence I*

Linde sat quietly at a table, enjoying a cup of tea. Currently, she was within the local tea shop that had recently appeared in the town of Kufstein. Sitting in front of her was Ludolf, who was currently dressed in dark robes whose hood concealed his appearance. At the moment, he was informing the spymaster of the information which he had received about Lambert's newest plot against Berengar. To any onlookers, they were merely a young lady and young man enjoying tea together. However, the gravity of the topic in which they discussed in hushed voices was immense. Ludolf took a sip from his tea before expressing his concerns to the woman who handled Berengar's spy network.

"Lambert has written a letter to the Bishop of Innsbruck, which the Head Priest of Kufstein has sponsored. It contains many accusations labeled against Berengar; the most important charge is that he lies with witches and consorts with demons. When the Bishop reads this letter, he will send for the inquisition to investigate the matters. As far as the inquisition is concerned, you probably are aware that they do not care what the truth is and will try to execute Berengar as a Heretic in order to solidify the Church's power in the region."

Linde was shocked when she heard such news. Lambert was truly getting desperate if he tried to rope the church into his schemes. Though after thinking it through, such actions did not surprise her. After all, the boy had been cornered by Berengar lately. Many of his allies were beginning to think twice about supporting him any further, and even Linde's father, the Count of Tyrol, was beginning to think about cutting his losses. If she had not become pregnant, Count Lothar would have dropped his support for Lambert. After coming to her senses, Linde smiled and thanked the Deacon for the important information he had provided her.

"Thank you for bringing this to my attention; I will inform the sovereign of Lambert's schemes. I trust he will have a sufficient answer to the problem when it rears its ugly head. Is there anything else I should be aware of?"

Ludolf smiled at Linde as there was more good news that the man had for the woman; he took a bite out of the pfeffernusse cookie before continuing with his report.

"There's an ally of Lambert's who is starting to have second thoughts. If we can get to him and convince him to switch sides, he may be able to testify about Lambert's misdeeds."

Linde eyed Ludolf cautiously as she thought about his words before speaking up.

"Who is he? and how did you come by this information?"

Ludolf chuckled as he sipped from his teacup before responding to Linde's inquiry.

"That foolish boy Ser Ingbert has confided with me his transgressions and has sought advice on how to proceed. After the death of Ulrich and Friedhelm, he is beginning to fear the worst. If he finds out that Lambert's own fiancée is on Berengar's side, then he will no longer have the confidence to support Lambert and may even turn on him entirely."

Linde mulled over Ludolf's suggestion as she took a sip from her glass. It was a risky plan; if Ingbert learned where her allegiance truly lied, he could instead report it to Lambert or her father, which would put her in a precarious position. He would need to be silenced and quickly if he were to make such a foolish mistake. Ultimately, she concluded that the potential reward outweighed the risk involved in such a scheme and nodded in approval of Ludolf's plan.

"Is there anything else I should know?"

Ludolf did have one more piece of important information to inform the Listener about. As such, he smiled underneath his dark hood, which was unnoticeable by any bystanders, and spilled the details.

"The von Thiersee family is investigating the Marshal's death; for whatever reason, Lambert is their biggest suspect. As such, I have communicated with the speaker of the cell in Thiersee, and he has been using his forces to lead the von Thiersee family to the conclusion that Ulrich's treason had something to do with Friedhelm's passing. As such, they have dispatched an Emissary to Wildsch?nau under the guise of diplomatic relations. I have no idea what such an investigation may yield, but it is something to be wary of."

Linde finished her tea and snacks before standing up from the table preparing to leave.

"If that is all, then I have work to do; until we meet again, speaker."

Ludolf nodded at Linde as she left the Tea Shop. Afterward, he snuck back to the Church, where he continued his work as a Deacon.

Linde, on the other hand, had many plans to set into motion; with these developments, she may fully be able to obtain the evidence needed to bring charges against Lambert. However, Berengar would never do such a thing so long as his father remained in power. However, the moment the old Baron left for the battlefield leaving Berengar in control of the Barony, he would have what he needed to arrest his brother and bring an end to this feud once and for all.

For now, the young woman embarked towards the manor of the Heltzer family, where Ser Ingbert was currently residing; she would need to convince him to switch sides if things were to progress the way she had envisioned. As such, she quickly got into a Carriage and traveled across the Barony to the land presided over by Ingbert's father, a knight in the servitude of Sieghard by the name of Helmer.

Hopefully, she would be able to return to Kufstein Castle by the end of the day so she could spend the night with her lover and master. She did not wish to spend the night halfway across the region in some lowly manor. Thus she wore a pouting expression as she sat in the Carriage, which traversed the land at a relatively stable pace.