

Steel 651

Chapter 651 - A New Power Rises in the East

Over the past few years, Berengar von Kufstein had risen from the humble position of baron's son to a powerful emperor. He had united the German people into a single Empire and had made it the most powerful nation in the western world. However, while this was occurring, another interesting figure had risen from a low status in the East.

In the Ashikaga shogunate, a rebellion was occurring and its last battle was drawing near. Five years ago, a young girl appeared within a small samurai clan. There were no sons in her clan, leaving her to be the one to master the art of war.

Despite her talent in the sword, the woman was more concerned with administrative control. This small village turned into a fierce stronghold as new agricultural technology had appeared. With food in abundance and fewer men being required to work in the fields, her father had gathered an army the likes his neighbors had never seen.

However, the Shogun soon became greedy and tried to take the profits of the local clan by force. Resistance occurred, and in the battle, the girl's father died, leaving her in command of the forces. At the young age of Fifteen this woman lead the warriors of her clan to victory, earning her the nickname the War Goddess.

Following her victory, the Ashikaga shogunate could no longer turn a blind eye and used its full might to crush the enemy forces. Yet when all appeared to be lost, the woman introduced a devastating weapon to her Ashigaru, who previously could not contend with the mighty samurai of her enemies. These Tanegashima, when employed in large numbers, secured yet another victory against her enemy.

Since then, the faction of the War Goddess, Itami Riyo, had rallied, conquered every village and stronghold she had come across slowly but surely, accumulating the land and resources needed to defeat her enemy.

Now a young woman dressed in a new improved armor design known as tosei gusoku stood on a hill outside the city of Heian-kyō which was the last bastion of the Ashikaga Shogunate. Her soldiers loaded their weapons as they prepared to launch their final attack against their long-standing enemy.

Itami Riyo was a beautiful young albino woman who wore a headband that represented the rising sun over her snow white hair. Her armor was black, with red fittings, and covered her from the neck down, securing her person from any weapons her enemy could throw at her. As a woman, she could seldom contend with the stronger men on the field of battle, and because of this, she tended to lead from the rear.

As the woman stood within her tent surrounded by her subordinate officers, she gazed upon the wooden pieces that represented the forces that would be besieging the city. As she stared at the mock siege taking place in front of her, she could not help but recall faint memories from a long-forgotten past.

In her past life, she was the child of Japanese Immigrants to the United States of America. Despite her family being wealthy, she decided on a military career after listening to her father speak of the heroic actions he took in defending the Empire from its enemies in the Second World War.

Even though her family wanted her to refrain from such a career, she had entered the Westpoint after graduating from high school, where she majored in mechanical engineering. After all, she was not foolish enough to major in something pointless and become a commander of a bunch of grunts.

During her spare time, Itami Riyo, or Mizuno Ai as she was known in that life, was commonly found in the school libraries having heated discussions with a peculiar young man. Though this man was not the best-looking guy in the world, nor was he really sociable, despite this she found that his intellect matched her own, and because of that the two of them were capable of having long-winded discussions about their passions.

It did not take long before the two were engaged in a heated rivalry centered on their respective fields. While Julian had majored in Civil Engineering with a Minor in mechanical engineering, she had done the opposite. Despite the difference in majors, both sought to outdo one another and rise in the ranks of the military as engineering officers. However, even though they were rivals, there was a close connection between the two.

It was only after the man's death in the line of duty that she realized there was something special between the two of them. Even now, it hurt her soul to think about what could have been should the two of them have been a bit less dense and, more importantly, actually capable of understanding their complex emotions.

Why was she remembering this? Because the two played war games together in the same group, and when she gazed upon the vivid display of the city she was about to lay siege to, she could not help but remember being a similar situation with her miniature army in her past life.

The difference between the city she was laying siege to now, and the one in her memories, was the fact that this city was entirely unprotected by barriers. Because of this, she would not need to force her way through a gate in order to eliminate her enemies.

If only those Ashikaga bastards had delivered her compensation as she demanded after her father's death years ago, this bloody rebellion could have been avoided. The woman no longer hesitated. She quickly gave a command to her soldiers to begin the attack.

"Commence the attack. Do not rest until every loyalist dog is put to the sword!"

The commanding officers quickly saluted the woman in a modern military fashion and responded with the highest respect.

"Yes kami-sama!"

They truly revered her as a living incarnation of a war god. Why wouldn't they? Until now, she had remained entirely undefeated in her campaigns. Her goal was simple: overthrow the Ashikaga shogunate and declare herself the new Shogun. She would not stop until the man responsible for her father's death had been killed.

The soldiers of the Itami Army received their orders and prepared to march into the streets, which were lined with the last few men loyal to the old power. They quickly descended with their matchlocks and their spears as they rushed through the defenseless city. Thunder echoed in the air as the Itami Ashigaru fired their matchlock firearms towards the enemy, cutting through their primitive o-yoroi armor as if it were mere butter.

When the first line of defenders fell, those with matchlocks fell back and allowed the melee infantry to engage the enemy. The Itami warriors screamed in the air their loyalty to their leader as they mercilessly cut down their rivals.

"For the Goddess!"

The fervor of the Itami forces was incomparable, especially among the Ashikaga loyalists, who were already weakened in morale. In five years, their country had fallen, and now they were the only thing defending the Shogun from his enemies. Despite this, the enemy's numbers were overwhelming, and blood poured into the streets as the city's defenders struggled to maintain their ground.

The battle continued for some time as the Itami forces made their way through the streets of the massive city, cutting down any man who resisted their conquest. If not for the strict rules of war that the War Goddess abided by, surely there would be some serious crimes against humanity that occurred. However, unlike Berengar, Riyo admired the modern rules of war from her past life, and would execute any of her men who dared to break them.

In the end, the city fell and the War Goddess strode through the blood-soaked streets as her soldiers kneeled before her. Finally, she would have her revenge. The doors of the Palace had long since been battered open by the time Riyo arrived. Standing before her was the Shogun who refused to kneel. Despite this his hands were tied behind his back and he was not a threat.

Riyo was furious as she gazed upon the man, and swiftly kicked him in the groin, forcing him to the ground.

"Kneel!"

The man felt like he was going to vomit after such a powerful shot, but he no longer refused the woman, as he simply lacked the strength to stand up once more. Riyo issued another command as she unsheathed her sword, whose steel blade shimmered under the light.

"Prepare him!"

The nearest Samurai held the Shogun down so his neck was lowered and was prepared to be severed. It was at this moment Riyo declared his guilt.

"Ashikaga Yoriharu, for the crimes of against my Clan, I hereby sentence you to death!"

The Shogun was about to curse the woman, but before he could say so the blade dropped, and so to did his head. A pool of blood formed on the ground as the viscous red substance sprayed in the air. With an expressionless face, Riyo grabbed hold of the head and dragged it outside her palace where her army lie in wait, boldly declaring the Rise of a New World Power.

"The Ashikaga Shogunate is defeated! Long live the Itami Shogunate!"

After saying this, the soldiers in the city repeatedly chanted the woman's cries.

"Long live the Itami Shogunate! Long live the Itami Shogunate! Long live the Itami Shogunate!"

With this, Riyo had united Japan under her banner, but this was only the beginning. She had plans to expand her power and influence via industrialization. Soon a new empire would form in the east, and she doubted that anyone in this world would be able to contend with her power! While this was occurring, the German Empire was taking great steps to modernize its infrastructure and was preparing for its final showdown with its rivals.

Chapter 652 - Just an Average Day at the French Border

On the edges of the Kingdom of France, a battalion of soldiers belonging to the German Border Guard stood in their trenches. These men were not the most highly trained or even veteran forces of the Imperial German Armed Forces, but they all had a role to play. The defense of the border was paramount, especially with so many hostile neighbors nearby.

It was because of this that Berengar had set into motion the plan to create a giant border perimeter designed to eliminate any army that dared to march into German Lands. These soldiers had chosen the German Border Guard as their branch of service, likely because they did not wish to deploy to some foreign battlefield.

On the outside, it was honorable to desire to defend the fatherland from its enemies, but in the eyes of the German Army and Marine Corps, many of these men were cowards, not willing to engage in the combat that was demanded of them. Still, they were the first line of defense in case of an enemy invasion. It had been well over a year since the German Empire was unified, and with it, young men from across the Realm were conscripted into service.

The armories had worked overtime to prepare enough arms for the new soldiers, and the fruits of their labor could be seen at the border where many German men stood idly by in their fortifications. As a few soldiers were playing cards in the trenches, they gazed upon the decks the army had issued them with smiles on their faces.

Though Berengar had never served in Iraq in his past life, he had heard stories from soldiers older than him that they issued decks of cards which contained the faces of the major leaders of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Taking inspiration from that, Berengar had replicated that tool in this life, and issued decks of cards to the border guards, with the faces of various important generals, and figures of the Kingdom whose border they guarded against. The King in this card game was none other than Aubry, while the Queen was Sibilla. The soldiers gazed upon the French King and laughed at how feminine he looked.

"Are you sure this is a King? He looks like he's more fitting for the Queen role if you ask me!"

The other soldiers agreed with his statement as they nodded their heads and smoked their hemp cigarettes. While this card game was occurring, a train arrived on the nearby tracks, and with it, the supplies to continue border construction arrived. A single man stepped off the lead car and entered into the camp. Due to his uniform, it was clear that this man was a general in the Border Guard, and because of that, the soldiers immediately hopped to attention and saluted the man.

Major General Johan Vilinger was a man who once served in the Austrian Royal Army and was previously deployed to the Iberian Theatre, where he defended a segment of the trench with his unit. Unfortunately, in the battle, he was the sole survivor of the Austrian unit. Despite the losses he suffered, he was rewarded for his efforts, and was later transferred to the Border Guard to live out a comfy life defending the Kingdom's borders.

With the unification of the German Empire, the need for skilled officers to preside over large segments of troops became a serious issue, and because of that a mere Colonel was thrust into a General Officer's position to maintain the border with the Kingdom of France. The man gazed upon the ongoing construction of bunkers, trenches, and no-man's-land and nodded his head in approval as he continued through the checkpoint.

He eventually noticed a gap in the defenses which was used to facilitate refugees, merchants, and immigrants into the German Empire. The contrast between the semi-modern German Soldiers and the medieval folk of the French Kingdom was quite a sight to behold. General Vilinger quickly proceeded to inspect the border security and their ongoing operation as he witnessed several German soldiers halting a group of refugees who were fleeing from the Kingdom of France..

Rumors have spread about the advancements of the German Empire and the quality of life within. Because of this, even nobles from the war-torn Kingdom of France were giving up their homes in an attempt to enter the German Empire.

An example of this was a particularly beautiful French noblewoman who presented proof of her identity to the Border Guard. She had prepared herself for the journey and learned the German language, thus she was able to converse with the border guards quite fluently.

"I am Anastasia De la Roche. I humbly request refugee status. My house is in ruin, thanks to King Aubry, and I am willing to marry into your Empire to escape the poverty of my family."

The woman had long brown hair and fair skin with emerald green eyes. Many of the soldiers were attracted to her, however, they had to keep it to themselves, as she was a noblewoman and would likely marry a German nobleman.

Though these soldiers could achieve noble status through exceptional feats of valor on the battlefield, the likelihood of these men seeing combat any time soon was slim. It would still be some time before the Catholic Kingdoms launched their invasion of Germany.

Thus, they could only sigh in defeat as the woman's papers were inspected. For the most part, only nobility had written records of their ancestry and noble status, thus they were the easiest individuals to identify at the border.

The soldiers confirmed the woman's identity and allowed her to go towards the customs section of the entry point, where she would continue through the lengthy process of immigration. Such a thing was a daily occurrence. Just as Johan believed everything was progressing smoothly, he heard the sound of a detonation far away and shook in his spot. However, a nearby soldier mocked him for his vigilance.

"Relax General, it's just a runner!"

The General was perplexed by this comment and quickly followed up for further information regarding the incident.

"A runner?"

The soldier noticed the man was not aware of something as common knowledge as this and quickly handed him a cigarette before speaking of the matter.

"Yeah, every now and then we get some desperate fool who thinks he can rush past our defenses and storm his way into our empire. Nine times out of ten, these idiots will step on a land mine and get themselves fragged. If not, they're gunned down before they can cause any harm to the Nation."

While hearing this explanation, the soldier lit the hemp cigarette for the General who seemed a bit spooked. He was suffering from a mild case of PTSD after what had happened in Iberia and tried to brush off the loud explosion after realizing what had occurred.

It was not entirely Germany's fault that people acted so foolishly and rushed into a minefield. The Border Guard had posted signs in the language of the people who resided on the other side of the defenses, detailing the risks of intruding into German Land. Still, some people were desperate to reach a land of such prosperity, and would willingly risk their lives in an attempt to do so.

The German soldiers did not care in the slightest. Their job was to protect the border, and they were not allowed to allow just anybody into their realm. A common motto resounded among the members of the German border guard as they openly mocked the people on the other side of their defenses. Something the soldier who was instructing the General on the harsh reality said out loud. PANDA-NOVEL

"A country is only as good as the people who live in it."

The meaning behind this mocking phrase was to insinuate not only was it not their responsibility to care for the people of lesser nations, but they would deliberately be ruining their own Empire if they imported the people from those nations as they were the cause of their own misfortunes.

Johan was surprised to see the existence of these so-called runners and immediately questioned the man in front of him.

"Is there any way to stop these people from running into their deaths?"

In response to this, the soldier chuckled before informing the General of his ignorance.

"They know the risks. There are signs posted everywhere informing them of what will happen if they unlawfully cross into our land. Unless we can somehow project our voice to them in an attempt to convince them, it simply isn't feasible. Besides, a lot of money is riding on how long they will survive. It will seriously ruin morale if we are forced to stop these incidents."

Initially Johan did not understand what the soldier meant by that phrase, but he quickly saw men of his army exchanging coins after seeing the death of the runner. The German Border Guard were gambling over the survivability of these so-called runners. Such a thing was a frightening prospect to the German General.

It was because of this incident that Johan decided he would write a strongly worded letter to the Kaiser about the ongoing crisis at the Border. As the construction of Germany's border defenses continued, the

soldiers dispatched to defend the regions grew increasingly callous about the situation of their neighboring kingdoms. As far as everything else went, things were progressing smoothly.

Chapter 653 - Wait for Tomorrow

Late in the night within the Kingdom of Austria, there lie a young redheaded woman. She sat in the window of the Royal palace as she contemplated everything her husband had told her. For the past three weeks, she had been using Imperial Intelligence to coordinate with the Department of Archeology so that she could find some hint of a god's trail.

However, despite the woman's best efforts, she had found nothing. It would appear that the gods left little clues as to their whereabouts while they hid from the mortal world. Because of this, Linde was in a state of depression as she thought about losing the man she loved. Not in this life, as she knew they would be together until their deaths.

What worried her was spending an eternity without him, after they passed away from this world. Supposedly, from what Berengar had told her, he was free to choose an afterlife. However, before he gained this freedom, the man was destined for the gates of hell.

Why was he destined to go to hell? Because he was a sinner, and because he had no faith in the Abrahamic God. After all, if the deity really existed, and was all powerful, then why did he allow the world to be such a troublesome place that was filled with injustice? However, after learning the truth, Berengar had come to realize that the deity in question was simply lacking power, and could only interfere with the world by using his believers as chess pieces.

Would he truly believe in such a powerless god after learning the truth? No, instead he decided that he would follow his own path in life regardless as to whatever mystical deity might try to interfere. As for Linde, she was still destined to end up in one of the Abrahamic afterlives, and considering she was so similar to Berengar, she feared that hell was her destination. However, what she feared the most was being torn away from the man she loved.

Berengar had noticed the woman was in a distressed state and had decided to calm her down. He approached the area where she sat staring at the starry night sky and handed her a virgin daiquiri. Normally, he would give the woman a distilled spirit to calm her nerves. However, she was currently pregnant, and he did not dare risk the wellbeing of the child within her womb.

"Linde, it's been three weeks. There is no reason to rush yourself. We have many years before either of us expires naturally. Take this time to enjoy life. If we stumble onto any clues in the future, we can free you and the girls from that old bastard's grasp, then."

Despite Berengar's kindness, Linde shook her head. She had an anxious expression on her face as she bounced one of her ideas off to the man she loved.

"You could always take me to those ancient ruins and ask that goddess to remove the mark on my soul!"

Berengar sighed as he headed this, and placed the palm of his hand on the woman's cheek, telling her his honest opinions on the idea.

"I could try, but I don't know if that would work. She made it seem like she wouldn't be able to see me again after I left. Like I said, those pricks like to be vague..."

The beautiful redheaded woman began to pout like a child as she heard this. The appearance of such a thing made Berengar laugh before he gently kissed her on the lips. She did not seem bothered by the sudden advancement and instead accepted her lover's kiss as she twirled her tongue with his.

Upon seeing that her mood had shifted, Berengar slowly reached his hand into the top of the woman's dress so that he could caress her bare breasts. Linde moaned in pleasure as she felt the warmth of her lover's firm hand. The sound excited the man as he focused on the woman's delicate pink nipples.

After a while, Berengar began to unzip the woman's dress until she was only in her underwear. As always, Linde had worn a particularly provocative set of undergarments, which were black and lacey. She even wore a garter belt with stockings. Under the moonlight, her pale skin practically glistened as Berengar gazed upon her figure with his one good eye.

"You are so beautiful..."

Such a cheesy remark was the only thing he could think of as he gazed upon his favorite bride. The woman flushed with embarrassment, before wrapping her arms around the sturdy neck of her man. She quickly pulled off the eyepatch that concealed his wounded face before he could react. Such a sudden motion shocked Berengar, who tried to take a step back. Despite this, she gazed upon the scarred eye of her lover and caressed the wound with a pretty smile on her face.

"I don't know why you try to hide it so much. Even though you can't see through it, your eye has healed nicely over the years. I think it gives you character!"

After saying this, the couple kissed once more. However, after several moments, Linde began to work her way down his torso and to his pants, where she quickly unzipped them, and pulled the man's massive member out of his briefs. She had an excited grin on her face as she began to lick the shaft as if it were a delicious ice cream cone.

Berengar sat back and watched as the strawberry blonde haired beauty serviced him in the middle of the largely vacant room. He could barely keep his legs standing as he quickly sat down on the windowsill. If he was not careful, he would fall out, and despite this, he felt excited at the danger presented.

Linde quickly began to work her way from the shaft to the glans as she inserted her husband's cock into her mouth. She started off slowly, as she took its length into her throat one inch at a time. After she cleared an inch, she would release it before going deeper and deeper until she was at the base, struggling not to gag.

As the pressure built up in his loins, Berengar pressed the woman's head down as far as it could go before forcefully ejaculating his seed into the woman's mouth. After doing so, he quickly withdrew his shaft and gazed at his lover as she contained the liquid in her mouth with puffed cheeks, as if she was a chipmunk. Linde revealed the sperm on her tongue before swallowing it. With a lust filled gaze on her pretty face, she said the words she knew her master wanted to hear.

"Thanks for the meal!"

Berengar could no longer hold back after hearing such seductive words and stripped out of his imperial regalia before parting the woman's thong to the side, where he lifted the woman into his arms and

quickly insert his shaft into her moist cave. Linde did not even attempt to hide her voice as she let out an erotic moan, signalling her enjoyment of the ongoing activities. As Berengar slowly thrust his hips into hers, he spoke sweet words that she knew would calm the woman's anxiety.

"Don't worry, my love, you and I will be together forever!"

Such shameless remarks caused the woman to flush red in embarrassment. Despite this, Berengar did not let her look away, forcing his lips onto hers as he licked her tongue with his own. Despite her embarrassment, Linde tightened onto Berengar's shaft as if she were in a vice grip, causing the man to thrust harder inside her depths.

Berengar continued to make love to his wife for some time. However, in the end he needed released and pressed his hips as tightly into hers as possible, releasing his seed into her full womb as if trying to impregnate her with another child.

However, Berengar was not the only one satisfied. While he was finishing inside his woman, Linde had squirted all over him. Causing quite the mess in the largely vacant room. When Linde gazed upon the scene, she giggled before kissing her husband. After doing so, she removed herself from his embrace and made a snide remark.

"I suppose the maids will have to clean up after us, yet again..."

Berengar couldn't help but chuckle when he heard this while he was getting dressed. He could see that the worry had escaped the woman's sky-blue eyes and could not help but ask how she was feeling.

"Are you feeling better?"

Linde nodded her head slightly as she gazed out the window. Upon seeing this, Berengar grabbed her dainty hand and led her out of the room.

"Then let's get some sleep. You need to rest. The gods can wait for tomorrow."

After saying this, the emperor absconded from the scene with the woman he loved and brought her into his quarters, where the couple fell asleep in each other's arms.

Chapter 654 - The Gunther Merchant Company

Gunther was a man who had once befriended the German Emperor. He started as a lowly peasant working in the fields, and now he owned a large corporation know as the Gunther Merchant Company. The man owned extensive plots of land throughout the Empire where farmers in his employment grew various crops. Aside from the agricultural aspect of his corporation, he also branched into Food Processing, possessing many factories built for this purpose.

The most recent product that Gunther had brought to the public was canned tuna. Gunther's brand Tuna was a hot-selling item, as it was an inexpensive food item, and provided great nutritional value. There were also Gunther branded condiments that were made by his corporation to accompany his canned meat, fish, and vegetables.

The food tycoon had a monopoly in the sense that he owned every aspect of production. Though he had several competitors, Gunther's brand was well trusted by the public due to its reputation for being of high quality at an affordable price.

Gunther had naturally taken advantage of the fact that the German Empire now had a presence in the Baltic, Mediterranean, and North Seas. With his fortune, he had purchased a fleet of fishing vessels and hired experienced fishermen to catch all kinds of different species so that they could be processed and sold to the public.

Tuna were different however, with Berengar's help, dedicated fish farms were created on the Island of Malta to produce vast quantities of tuna. Due to his nature as a member of the House of Commons, Gunther was able to acquire one of these farms for himself at a fair price.

At the moment Gunther was invited to the Royal Palace where Berengar had met with him personally for the first time in years. The Emperor smiled as he reminisced about years past, where he helped the man toil his fields for the sake of a small amount of lard. He could hardly believe that Gunther was now a tycoon of his industry, and a politician of the people. Despite his fortune, he never ceased to care for the common people, and had even spent a large chunk of his treasury on philanthropic endeavors.

While the two were making small talk, Linde entered the scene with two foot-long tuna melts. She handed them on the table to Berengar and Gunther with a pretty smile on her face. Berengar immediately took a bite of the delicious substance and complimented Gunther on his hard work.

"You know, without your products, it would be extremely difficult to produce a sandwich this good. Thanks to your business, and Linde's ingenuity, such a delicious sandwich can be made by just about anybody. The years have been kind to you, my friend. It is a shame we haven't been able to speak in some time."

Gunther smiled as he gazed at the sandwich made entirely from his products. He took a quick bite and exclaimed in joy as he complimented Linde's efforts.

"I did not know such a tasty meal could be made by my simple products. Empress, your culinary talents are extraordinary."

Linde smiled and thanked the man for his compliments.

"You are too kind, Gunther."

After saying this, she departed from the room, not wanting to interrupt what limited time Berengar had to spare with the man. Gunther gazed upon the lovely empress as she walked out of the door before congratulating Berengar on his marriage.

"Linde has turned into a fine young woman. You are lucky to have her..."

Berengar nodded his head in response before switching the subject.

"She's the love of my life, erm... don't tell the others I said that. On a more serious note, I was wondering if you were interested in some business involving the colonies."

The business tycoon initially chuckled as he listened to the Emperor's words before turning very serious. If his majesty was trusting him with such information, then what they were about to discuss was no laughing matter.

"So they really exist? I've theorized that you discovered some new plot of land which allows you to produce these strange foods that you have introduced. However, until now, I didn't truly believe it."

The German Emperor had a faint smile on his face as he informed the man of the truth.

"It's not just a plot of land, but two whole continents. We're talking about an entirely new world. With native inhabitants."

When Gunther heard this, he took a bite from his sandwich before wiping his mouth with his handkerchief. Having heard this, his interest in the topic grew substantially.

"Are any of these natives a threat?"

In response to this, Berengar chuckled lightly before informing the man of the state of the New World.

"Not in the slightest, they are a bunch of stone age savages. The most advanced of their civilizations are in the south, and even then I brought one of their mightiest Empires to its knees with a thousand men, and a bit of disease. Speaking of disease, in a few decades it will ravage the land and kill off well over 90% of the population. The mortality rate is insane.

Once that happens, it's practically free real estate with an abundance of natural resources. Since you are an old friend of mine who has proven to be trustworthy, I want to let you in on this secret in advance."

Gunther came to an understanding when he heard Berengar's reasoning and a sly smile curved itself on his lips as he spoke to his emperor.

"You need investment? Don't you?"

Berengar shrugged his shoulders before taking another bite out of his sandwich, which he washed down with a liter of beer. After doing so, he clarified his position.

"Do I need investment? No, I have enough money to fund the development of the colonies myself. However, I would be lying if I said it wasn't taking a toll on my treasury. Investment would be a nice addition to the funds I have personally thrown towards the new world. What do you say? Do you want to make a larger fortune than you already have?"

Gunther would be lying if he said he wasn't interested in the idea, however he was cautious on the matter and inquired for further details.

"What did you have in mind?"

When Berengar heard this, he smiled before revealing his thoughts on the matter.

"It's simple. I will issue a charter, giving your corporation the right to settle the new world in an area of your choosing. In return, it will officially become a colony of the German Empire and will act as any other German territory in terms of its civil responsibilities. However, the colony itself will be established and operated by your corporation. You will be responsible for the start-up costs, the development costs, the defense costs, and, of course, taxes."

Gunther thought about it for a few moments before asking about the natural resources of the land. He needed to know more about the region if he was going to sink a fortune into the development of a colony.

"What kind of land am I looking at?"

Berengar did not hesitate to respond. Instead, he had a wide smile on his face as he laid out the information they had gathered from the new world thus far.

"That would entirely depend on where you choose to settle. We have found in our colonies agricultural resources, such as potatoes, tomatoes, tobacco, and even cocoa. Some of these things have yet to be introduced to the fatherland. The land is highly fertile, so there is little risk of crop failure.

I'm assuming you want to produce an agricultural colony? Might I suggest branching into an area you have not experienced yet? In my opinion, you should establish a colony in one of the many island chains, where you can grow vast quantities of sugarcane and coffee. It would be nice to have a domestic source of those resources."

Gunther thought about this proposal for several minutes. If he could produce sugarcane and coffee, he could cut out the merchants in the east. After all, such resources could not grow in the fatherland, and were relied upon for imports.

However, the German people were fiercely nationalistic, and if he could create a monopoly over those resources, the people would quickly term to the trusted Gunther brand. Thus, he released a heavy sigh as he dwelled upon the best way to make this a reality.

"I would need ships, as well as workers, from all different aspects of life. This would have to be a long-term settlement, and my employees would have to be promised some serious benefits to sail across the Atlantic into an unknown world where they would have to create a settlement from scratch.

I would also need to hire a private security force to maintain order, and to defend the region from the natives. Such a thing is no small expense. I would, of course, need permission to raise such a private armed force as well."

Berengar understood where the man was coming from. It was difficult finding trustworthy people who could be sent to the new world. The plus side was the lack of communication with the fatherland, making it difficult to leak information. Berengar knew this and decided to cut the man some slack.

"I will allow you to register a private military corporation so that you can maintain security within your colony and defend it from any hostile force that may seek to invade it. I will also permit this company to purchase military arms and naval vessels. However, its size shall be limited to a single brigade, and a small fleet of five Armored Frigates.

As for everything else you may need, I will leave that up to your discretion. Naturally, all of this is strictly confidential and if you or any of your people leak information about the New World, it will be considered treason. So, are you up for the challenge?"

It shocked Gunther to hear that Berengar was so willing to agree to his terms. However, he also understood the position Berengar was in. The Imperial German Armed Forces were limited in their ability to deploy to the New World, and there were plenty of veterans who no longer served that could be used to help aid in the establishment of colonies as mercenaries.

Ultimately, Berengar wanted to claim as much land as possible before the other world powers found out about the New World, and because of that, he was willing to privatize colonies to speed up the

colonization process. It was because of this that he was willing to allow the existence of Private Military Corporations. When Gunther thought about all of this, he nodded his head and reached out his hand to seal the deal.

"Very well. I agree with your terms. I look forward to the colonization of this new world."

Berengar smiled and shook the man's hand. Afterward, the two men spent many hours catching up on the years they had spent climbing to the top. With this deal, the Gunther Merchant Company would have the first private colony in the New World.

Chapter 655 - Open Rebellion

While Berengar spent a considerable amount of time, effort, and expense improving the industrial capabilities of the fatherland, a woman in a similar position on the other side of the world was struggling to introduce reforms in her new Shogunate that would allow her to exert absolute power over her country.

The Ashikaga shogunate had fallen, Itami Riyo and her fanatical followers ruthlessly purged the head of its dynasty, as well as all living heirs. The woman in question had forced the Imperial Family to recognize her as the Shogun. Despite this, there was fierce resistance from the daimyos of Japan. In Berengar's past life, few women were ever made Shogun, and it was the same in this world. Because of this, it was difficult for those in power to accept Riyo's reign.

The various Daimyo clans had banded together under her banner to overthrow the Ashikaga shogunate for various reasons, however now that a woman was claiming to be the new Shogun, few of her former followers accepted it. The territory she had unified immediately collapsed into infighting, as those who believed she was unworthy of such a high position used the weapons she had introduced to resist her rule.

Riyo sighed heavily as she sat in the Shogun's palace while she read yet another letter declaring rebellion against her rule. She poured herself a cup of sake as she drank its contents with much enthusiasm. Her snow white cheeks flushed red as she did so, giving her a rather cute appearance. After drinking yet another cup, she complained about the men who had turned against her.

"Ignorant bastards! Have I not achieved enough in life to show you my worth as a leader? If not for me, you damn fools would never have overthrown the Ashikaga clan. God damn it! Just because I'm a woman, these idiots think I can not lead a country. Well, I'll show them! I'll show them all. If you think matchlocks are the only weapons that I can come up with, just you wait until my loyal soldiers are armed with Muratas. I'll kill you all! Every last one of you bastards!"

Upon saying this, the young woman pulled out a piece of paper where she began drafting blueprints for a single shot, black powder rifle, as well as its matching bayonet. Similar to the 1871 Gewehr, the Murata rifle was a .45 caliber rifle. The development of such a weapon would put her infantry on par with Berengar's. Of course, she had no idea that a man had risen to power in the west and formed a mighty Empire.

For some time, she had been planning to introduce new weapons. Unfortunately, it was not until recently where she had the chemical capabilities to produce brass case cartridges. However, she was too busy with the war until now to bother putting such things into production. Yet, she knew that if she

wanted to truly devastate her opponents, she would have to rely on yet another fierce weapon design from her past life.

The young Shogun spent many hours drafting all kinds of new weapons to modernize her forces. From Murata Rifles, to type 26 Revolvers, and even Rifled Breechloaders. She desired to modernize her forces and implement a strict military dictatorship as soon as possible.

As she was designing these weapons, Riyo recalled in her memories of her past life having a fierce argument with a certain somebody over the superiority of German vs Japanese firearms leading up to World War Two. She took another drink of sake as she remembered a particular argument about the Kar98k vs the Type 99. Dwelling upon this subject; Riyo wore a bitter smile as she expressed her views on the matter.

"If that bastard Julian had reincarnated in this world, I can bet he would have created the Mauser 1871 by now. I can only imagine the petty arguments we would have about that rifle and the Murata. What an idiot. He cared more about being right than about my feelings. He really was scum... Still, I wonder how he would handle my current situation..."

Since the Daimyos beneath her command were now rebelling against her, Riyo only had one option: crush them so brutally that they would never dare to oppose her reign ever again. She was about to curse them out once more when a man entered the room. He wore the *tosei gusoku* that had become common among the samurai that pledged their loyalty to Itami Riyo. This man also carried a Katana and wakizashi on his waist. This man instantly knelt before Riyo and informed her of recent developments.

"Itami-sama, the Daimyo Shimazu Takatame, has declared open rebellion and captured the city of Naniwa. How shall we respond?"

Riyo pursed her lips while dwelling on how to handle this information. She had just won the war against the Ashikaga Shogunate, and already the rebels were moving against her newly formed Itami Shogunate. She had no choice but to crack down on the enemy before they could recruit more Daimyos to their cause. However, this newest rebellion was complicated. Because of this, she bit her finger before cursing out the man who had betrayed her.

"More bad news? Shimazu Takatame that fucking bastard. Just last week, he pledged his undying love to me. However, the moment that I reject his marriage proposal, he seeks to overthrow me. So be it! Assemble the Army, we will march on Naniwa immediately. I want that traitor's head!"

Having said this, the officer who had approached the shogun nodded his head before responding in affirmation of his orders.

"As you command, Itami-sama."

After the general slinked back into the shadows, Riyo threw her ceramic cup at the wall as hard as she could, shattering it upon impact. Before she could even manufacture her newest weapons, she was betrayed by yet another one of her vassals, and for such a petty reason, too.

Shimazu Takatame was one of the first men to pledge their loyalty to Riyo, and had strived to win her favor for some time. However, he was not exceptional enough to catch the woman's interest. Though he

came from a powerful clan, and had inherited his father's position during Riyo's rebellion, he was far from desirable in the woman's eyes. After Riyo had achieved victory, the man in question asked her to marry him, however she refused, and quite brutally, her exact words were as follows.

"I have no desire to marry you, Takatame-san. I need a man who challenges me, a man who is capable of defeating me at my own game, and that man isn't you..."

Apparently, such a harsh response had caused Takatame to declare open rebellion. Whether it was out of hatred for being rejected, or simply to prove his worth, Riyo did not know. Either way, she did not care. She would crush the man's army and claim his head. After all, she did not tolerate treason.

Having issued the orders for her army to assemble, Riyo began to prepare herself for the long journey. There was no time to wait. She needed to assemble her forces and march on the city of Naniwa as quickly as possible. Before she could institute her reforms that would turn Japan into a hereditary military dictatorship, the woman needed to crush a rebellion or two.

If Riyo knew that Julian had reincarnated into this world as a German nobleman, and had already united his people into a stable Empire, she would probably throw a fit. She always hated being one upped by the man, and the fact that her Daimyo rebelled against her rule the moment she united Japan beneath her rule was utterly frustrating.

Before long, an army of fifteen thousand men was on the march towards the city of Naniwa. Although these men would soon fight a mortal battle with those who, just days ago, were their brothers in arms, they lacked any form of remorse on their faces. For these men were absolutely loyal to the War Goddess, and to rebel against her was practically heresy. Before Riyo could even catch a break, she was once more on the road to war. Such was the life of a conqueror.

Chapter 656 - Chocolate Agreements

Weeks after the Aztec Princess had set sail for her home country, she now sat within the Royal Palace of Tenochtitlan. In front of her was her father, Emperor Itzcoatl, the current ruler of the Aztec Empire. In the months since the Germans first arrived in the region, disease had become widespread. If not for the efforts of the German Medics who dwelled in the settlement of Berenstadt, then the Aztecs would have suffered greatly.

Still, these diseases had made their way to the neighbors of the Aztec Empire and had begun to devastate their populations. It was a time of expansion as far as Itzcoatl was concerned. Thus he was surprised to see his daughter, who he had assigned as his Empire's diplomat, to the Feathered Serpent sitting before him.

The young Aztec Princess had a smile on her pretty face as she wore far more civilized attire than her father was used to seeing. Still, she did not care for the extravagant dresses that the German women wore. Years of training to be a jaguar warrior had given her a more practical sense of fashion. Thus, she was dressed in clothing that one might expect a female tennis player to wear.

Itzcoatl was curious as to why his daughter might be visiting him so soon after following Berengar back to the land of the gods. The girl could tell her father was worried and thus she decided to ease his troubled mind with an assuring statement.

"His majesty, Kaiser Berengar von Kufstein has instructed me to negotiate with you in the acquisition of cocoa. It would appear he has some uses in mind for it, and wants a large supply of cocoa beans to be transferred to the settlement of Berenstadt. He has left the bartering up to me."

The currency of the Aztec Empire was fairly primitive. It used a copper axe-head, which was supposed to be the value of 8,000 cocoa seeds, which was the most common form of currency in the region. Since the German Empire did not have cocoa, and were instead trying to purchase cocoa beans to be processed into chocolate, they obviously could not pay with the latter.

As for the copper axe heads, Berengar had no desire to manufacture such primitive devices as a means of trade. After all, copper was a valuable resource, and he had no desire to squander it on something so meaningless. Thus he had given Tlexictli permission to barter on his behalf, despite being a diplomat of her father to his empire. It showed how much trust he had developed in the girl after she had witnessed the splendor of the fatherland.

Even now the Aztec Princess was gazing upon her own people as backward savages, despite only spending a few months in the fatherland. She desired to finish these negotiations and return to Germany as quickly as possible. Itzcoatl could tell that his daughter was displeased, despite her smiling appearance, and decided to ask about her journey to the east.

"I didn't expect to see you so soon. We don't need to discuss business right away. How have you been? What is it like over there?"

Tlexictli dwelled upon her brief time in the German Empire and could hardly described everything she had seen, in the end she could only sigh before revealing the truth of the matter.

"Compared to the Germans, we are nothing but filthy savages. It's impossible to explain the difference between our two civilizations with words. Just know that they are well ahead of us. Their military power alone is overwhelming."

Itzcoatl had not personally witnessed the power of the German soldiers who had massacred his forces, but he had heard tales. A shiver went down his spine as he inquired further about the German Empire's military might.

"How powerful are they?"

In response to this question, Tlexictli merely scoffed before answering her father in a condescending tone.

"They have hundreds of thousands of men whose sole occupation is to wage war. Imagine that, having such a large professional army. As you know, our Empire revolved around part-time commoner soldiers, with professional warriors among the nobility.

I have personally seen the weapons they use in war, and to think such a large force is equipped with them, it is utterly terrifying. Father, you would be wise to be obedient to the Kaiser. If he were to march a fraction of his army into our lands, we could not resist."

The prospect of hundreds of thousands of professional soldiers was just as Tlexictli had said, utterly terrifying. Upon learning that the German Empire had such means, he quickly inquired about their neighbors.

"The Kaiser told me that he has plenty of neighbors, who, when they learn of these lands, will invade, do you have any information about them?"

Unfortunately for the Aztec Emperor, his daughter's response was less than ideal. She shook her head before informing her father of what little she had been able to learn from reading the books in the Palace's library.

"I suppose I should tell you that what you have been told about the German Empire is a lie. They are not the envoys of the feathered serpent. They merely used our mythology to convince you to kneel before them. From what I have learned, the German Empire is a recently founded state. It's a little over a year old.

Before the unification of the Empire, Germany was a loose collection of several smaller states. The Kaiser personally unified them under his banner via a series of overwhelming military victories in a span of about six years. He appears to be the man responsible for the rapid progress that Germany has achieved. Perhaps he himself is divine, but the feathered serpent has no part in it.

However, just because he lied to you about the origins of his Empire, it does not mean he was lying about the threat his neighbors pose to us. Though they are behind the German Empire in pretty much every aspect, they are still far beyond us in every facet of society, especially warfare.

If we were to fight a war with German's neighbors our weapons could not penetrate their armor, and because of Berengar's rapid rise to power, they have been investing a considerable amount of time, effort, and expense into competing with his military technology.

An arms race is taking place on the continent where our Suzerains are from, and Germany is well above their rivals. However, their rivals also seem to be making a rapid pace ahead of us. If we were to decline the Empire's offer of protection against their neighbors, it would only be a matter of time before our civilization is destroyed."

Itzcoatl took his daughter's words to heart. She had a better understanding of the German Empire than he did, and though he was enraged to find out that Berengar and his Empire were not the envoys of the feathered serpent, he realized that it would not be wise to break his agreement with them. Having heard they have such a massive army, and the means to project it across the atlantic, the Aztec Emperor had no desire to fight with his overlords. Instead, he nodded his head before switching to the topic of cocoa beans.

"What offer does the Kaiser make in exchange for our cocoa beans?"

Tlexictli smiled when she heard her father was more agreeable after listening to her tale of German military might. She quickly began to answer his question with a proud smile on his face.

"He has offered to exchange for cocoa beans with steel tools."

The Aztec Emperor did not know what this meant and quickly inquired about their use.

"Steel?"

Upon seeing her father so confused, Tlexictli explained more in depth about what he would be trading large quantities of cocoa beans for.

"Steel is a metal that is far superior to copper when used in tools. It is stronger, more durable, and holds an edge better. With these tools, our slaves can be more productive in the mines and in the fields. He is willing to offer a certain amount of tools in exchange for a ton of cocoa beans."

After saying this, the women went into depth explaining the different measuring systems used by the Empire. The father and daughter negotiated for some time before an agreement was made. For every one hundred steel tools, a ton of cocoa beans could be exchanged. This was a good deal for the German Empire, as they had an excessive supply of steel.

In the end Tlexictli had reached an agreement with her father that would allow for a mass importation of Cocoa, thus making Berengar an extremely happy man, as he could now, finally, make the many chocolate deserts that Germany was known for in his past life. After fulfilling her obligations, she intended to take the first ship back to the fatherland. After all, she no longer cared for the primitive life of her people's empire.

Chapter 657 - Meeting with the Grand Duke of Moscow

Currently, Berengar sat in his office enjoying a cup of company with a guest. This guest was none other than the Grand Duke of Moscow. Since the days of Genghis Khan, the Rus states had been under the control of the Golden Horde. However, the Golden Horde had recently made a major mistake.

They had angered the German Empire by acting as a middleman in the sale of saltpeter to the Reich's enemies. Such a material was necessary in the creation of gunpowder. Berengar had always desired to limit the amount of firearms his enemies were able to field, and for a while, he had succeeded in this endeavor.

However, with the new Khan of the Golden Horde rising to power, he had sworn to avenge his predecessor, who was taken out by Berengar's assassins. Though he knew he could not win an outright war with Germany, he could at the very least supply their enemies with the means to put up some resistance.

Casimir of the House of Rurik was the Grand Duke of Moscow. However, the thing that surprised Berengar was that he was a young boy of roughly thirteen years of age. This child had recently succeeded his father after the man was poisoned to death. Rumors have it that the Prince himself was responsible for his father's death, but such allegations could not be proven.

After ascending to the throne, the boy had decided that he would do everything in his power to overthrow the yoke of the Golden Horde and liberate his people from their servitude. This meant he had to get involved with the devil in the west.

Despite Berengar's fearsome reputation, the young Grand Duke was not the slightest bit intimidated, rather he sat with such grace that even Berengar considered himself a barbarian in the presence of the youth.

Casimir was an oddity in Berengar's eyes. The boy looked rather androgynous. While Berengar wouldn't necessarily call him pretty or feminine, he certainly wasn't masculine either. He had delicate features, with a slender figure. His hair was medium in length, and was platinum blonde. He had a set of ice-blue eyes and pale skin. The Grand Duke had a cold glimpse in his eyes as he tasted the coffee that Berengar

had personally brewed for him. Upon seeing such a reaction, Berengar could guess that the boy did not enjoy the drink.

"What's wrong? Is the beverage I have prepared not to your liking?"

The boy shook his head as he revealed his thoughts on the drink.

"Too bitter..."

Berengar did not know what kind of sweet tooth the kid had to deny his coffee. Berengar had always prepared his coffee with both milk and sugar. If it was bitter, then just what did the boy consider sweet? Because of this, the two monarchs were left in a state of awkward silence for a few moments. Ultimately, Berengar decided to shift the topic to business and inquired about the boy's reasoning for visiting.

"So... Let me guess you have come to Kufstein so that I might support you in overthrowing your suzerains. Is that correct?"

There was a hint of surprise in the Casimir's eyes as he heard this. His only reaction was a silent nod of his head. When Berengar witnessed this, he sighed before commenting on the reason for his visit.

"I can not provide you with military aid, however if you would like to establish trade between our two realms, I would be happy to sell you some firearms, as well as the gunpowder and munitions to use them at a fair price."

Casimir placed his cup of coffee down on a plate before nodding his head once more. There was no hint of emotion in his voice as he agreed to Berengar's terms.

"Name your price."

With this said, Berengar quoted his standard price for the sale of arms and munitions. In order to compete with the newest, albeit crude firearms that his enemies had produced, Berengar ceased the production and sale of arkebuses and falconets, and instead began to produce, and sell Matchlock Muskets, and Six pound cannons modelled after the 1417 12 lb field gun. Naturally, he raised the price for the superior arms.

"I will sell you matchlock muskets and six-pound cannons at a price of five German Guldens per musket, and twenty-five German Guldens per Cannon. If you buy in bulk, I will give you a ten percent discount. As for the munitions and gunpowder, I will sell you one barrel of musket balls for one gulden, and one barrel of gunpowder for three guldens."

Sitting next to Casimir was a man of Russian noble origin, and he was apparently the Grand Duke's military advisor. He was a tall and muscular man, despite his elderly age. The man was balding and had a long white beard. He whispered into the youth's ears something that Berengar could not understand, due to the language barrier. After the boy nodded his head, he agreed to Berengar's terms.

"I accept..." IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT FREEWEBNOVEL.COM TO EXPERIENCE FASTER UPDATE SPEED.

Evidently Casimir was a man of little words, because he did not say much in Berengar's presence, and instead eyed him with caution, while acting with the grace befitting an emperor. There was, of course,

another possibility. The boy did not speak much German. Either way, communication between the two parties was fairly stiff. However, Berengar didn't mind the boy's icy attitude. After all, he now had another customer in the arms trade.

Though the idea of Russia's unification was something Berengar did not want to permit, his petty and spiteful nature got the better of him as he currently wanted nothing more than to get back at the Golden Horde for facilitating the trade of gunpowder to his enemies. Because of this, Berengar was glad to make use of the Grand Duchy of Moscow to act as his proxy in the matter. With a wicked smile on his face, Berengar nodded his head and responded to the boy.

"It is a pleasure doing business with you..."

Casimir simply responded with a nod of the head and a single word.

"Likewise..."

Upon seeing that conversing with the youth was lost cause Berengar merely sighed before ending the meeting for the day.

"So long as you are in Kufstein you are permitted to reside in my Palace. If there is anything you need while you are here, simply ask one of my servants and they will provide it."

The icy prince merely nodded his head in understanding and accepted Berengar's terms.

"I thank you for your hospitality."

After saying this, he stood up from his chair and left the room. His military advisor was in tow. The moment he departed from the room, he came across a young heterochromia beauty who was roughly the same age as him.

This girl was Princess Veronika, and she immediately caught the Grand Duke's interest. However, she did not even notice the androgynous boy, who stopped in his tracks as he gazed at the young woman with awe. Instead, Veronika ran into Berengar's office with a pouting expression on her face, yelling the words.

"Your Majesty, the Prince Hans is being mean to me!"

While he did not hear the rest of the conversation between the German Emperor and the Princess of Bohemia, he quickly turned to his military advisor and spoke in their mother tongue.

"Who is that beautiful girl?"

The military advisor was taken aback when he heard these words come from the Prince. Until now, the boy had never shown an interest in girls. It was because of that he made fun of the Grand Duke.

"His highness is interested in a girl? Hmm, I always thought you preferred the company of men..."

The cold gaze of the Grand Duke of Moscow shifted over to his advisor with a deadpan expression on his face as he responded to such an absurd claim.

"That's not funny Igor..."

The man instead sighed as he put up a defeated expression before commenting on the boy's tendencies.

"I thought for sure the Kaiser was more your type. It appears I have been mistaken. I humbly apologize for my ignorance. If your highness fancies the girl, I will have her brought to your room later."

Despite Igor's words, Casimir remained expressionless. He only responded with a silent nod of the head before departing towards the quarters he had been allotted during his stay in Kufstein. Even if he did not look like it, his heart was beating beneath his chest at the thought of the exotic bohemian beauty.

As for Berengar, he was entirely unaware of the conversation that was had between the Grand Duke and his advisor, for if he did, he would have put a stop to the notion that Veronika was available then and there. The Princess of Bohemia was his ward, and thus she was under his protection. It would be quite the misunderstanding later that evening when the Grand Duke of Moscow tried to force the girl towards his quarters.

Chapter 658: Little Monster

Shortly after Berengar had finished his meeting with the Grand Duke of Moscow, Princess Veronika entered his office. She had a pouting expression on her cute face and seemed to be filled with indignation. Berengar could only guess that Hans had said or done something to piss her off. Sure enough, the adolescent girl immediately began to complain about her fiancée.

"Your majesty, the Prince Hans has done something indecent to me!"

Berengar could only sigh as he rested his head in the palm of his hand. Whatever Hans had done to the girl, it had clearly been something significant for her to come crawling to the Emperor while seeking restitution. However, before he could inquire about what the little bugger had done, the Princess of Bohemia exposed the boy's shameful actions with an embarrassed expression on her face.

"Hans flipped up my skirt!"

Such information stunned Berengar. This was such a petty matter that he felt like he shouldn't be the one responsible for handling it. After all, he was an emperor. Thus, he stared at the girl in disbelief before commenting on the situation.

"Is that all? If so, go find Linde and she will scold the boy. I don't have time to waste on such frivolities."

Veronika could hardly believe that Berengar was leaving this matter to his wife. After all, she felt as if she had been shamed greatly. She immediately began to protest Berengar's unwillingness to discipline his son, but before she could utter a word, the man held his hand up and glared at her.

"I'm busy. If you want to complain some more, go find my wife. I'm sure she would be willing to listen to all of your petty problems, unfortunately I do not have the time to bother."

Upon realizing that she was being a nuisance, Veronika nodded her head silently with a downcast expression on her face before departing from the room. It was only after she had entered the hallway that the man known as Igor, who acted as the Grand Duke of Moscow's personal advisor, approached her. Veronika had a sense of fear in her mismatched eyes as the stranger approached her with an awkward smile on his face.

"The Grand Duke of Moscow Casimir requests your presence. Please, follow me!"

Though Veronika wanted to resist, she could tell by the cold glint in the man's eyes that he was not making a simple request. As such, she nodded her head in silence, and followed him to the quarters that Berengar had allotted to the Grand Duke. After entering the room, Veronika saw the boy staring out the window. He had an icy expression on his androgynous face as he shifted his gaze towards the young girl.

"Tell me, miss, what is your name?"

Veronika did not know why this strange-looking boy had requested her presence. Perhaps he knew she was the Princess of Bohemia. She glanced back at the entrance, which was being guarded by Igor, and noticed that her escape route was cut off. She had no choice but to tell the boy her identity.

"My name is Veronika your highness, may I ask why you have brought me here?"

The cold boy slowly approached the girl, the slightest hint of a smile etched itself upon his lips as he closely examined the Bohemian Princess. She was truly the type of girl he desired, and he did not hide his feelings.

"You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. Are you a servant of the Kaiser, perhaps?"

Veronika was taken aback when she heard the Grand Duke did not know of her position. She was not the slightest bit interested in the boy's flatter, nor did she hide her disdain as she responded in a haughty tone.

"I am a ward of his majesty Berengar von Kufstein. I am the last Princess of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and the fiancée of Prince Hans von Kufstein. If your reason for bringing me here is indecent, I will tell my father-in-law, and he will have your hands removed!"

The sudden shift from meek to bold shocked the Grand Duke of Moscow. He could hardly believe that this young girl was the Princess of Bohemia, a Kingdom that was now a part of the German Empire. Currently, Berengar held its crown, along with Austria's, and nobody had heard about what happened to the previous Monarch's family after the Kingdom fell to the Hussites. To think that Berengar was keeping such a young beauty to himself made Casimir's blood boil.

Casimir was a man who foolishly did not fear Berengar, perhaps because his realm was so far away from the German Empire that he believed himself to be safe. It was because of this that he grasped hold of Veronika's wrist and pressed her against the wall. He was just about to force a kiss on her when the girl slapped him across the face, leaving a bright red handprint.

"Bastard! What do you think you are doing? When the Kaiser finds out what you have tried to do to me, he will not be merciful!"

However, Casimir was far from pleased. His eyes had a murderous glow to them as he punched the girl in the gut, sending her to her knees.

"You fucking bitch! How dare you treat me this way! Do you have any idea who I am?"

Coincidentally, as this was ongoing the Prince Hans had rounded the corner and walked down the halls. He noticed Igor standing guard at the door and immediately became suspicious. After hearing screaming come from inside the room, he rushed over to see what was happening. Though Igor tried to prevent him from interfering, Hans made a bold threat to the man.

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"If you do not get out of my way right now, I will have your manhood fed to the pigs!"

Normally such a threat would be laughable coming from such a young boy. However, Hans had pulled out a boot knife and held it firmly against the man's junk. The Prince had just come back from the Cadet Corps, and was heading towards his room that was in the same hall as Veronika's to wash up and get changed. When the man saw the blade pressed against his family jewels, he immediately broke out into a cold sweat, however he did not move. Instead, he called out to the Grand Duke, informing him that he had a visitor.

"your highness, the Prince is here to see you!"

Casimir had a grim look on his face as he gazed over towards the boy Hans, who held a blade to Igor's groin. With a wicked smile, Hans inserted the blade into the man's loins, causing him to scream in pain and fall to his knees. He ruthlessly ripped the blade from out of the larger man's body and wiped the blood on Igor's shirt before approaching the Grand Duke of Moscow. Upon seeing the murderous glint in Hans' sapphire eyes, the young Grand Duke released his grip over Veronika's hair and stumbled backwards.

"You little monster! What have you done?"

Hans was in no mood to spar with words and quickly approached the adolescent boy after gazing upon the state of his fiancée. Veronika had been beaten by Casimir, her hair was messed up, and blood was spilling from her lips. Such a thing could not be forgiven. Because of this, Hans closed the distance between him and his target with the blade held in one hand.

"Your dare to lay a hand on my woman? Bold... truly bold... Since you have committed such an unforgiveable act, I will not be merciful."

Casimir was shocked to see the young boy speak in such an educated manner. He tried to resist, but Hans kned him in the groin, dropping the boy to his knees. He grabbed hold of the Grand Duke's medium length hair with one hand and brought the blade close to the boy's lips.

"I'm going to give you a permanent reminder on your face as to why you should not fuck with Germany, you stupid Slavic dog!"

After saying this, Hans carved away at the edges of the boy's lips with his boot knife, creating severe lacerations that were eerily reminiscent of a certain comic book villain from Berengar's past life. The boy screamed in pain as his face was disfigured by the German Prince.

While this was happening, Veronika gazed in astonishment at the lengths Hans was willing to go to, to avenge her. Though she had prevented Casimir from stealing her first kiss, she had invoked his ire and had suffered his wrath. Had Hans not arrived when he did, it was likely that she would be severely beaten, and perhaps even raped.

All she could do was watch as the young boy who was her fiancée mutilated the Grand Duke of Moscow, who was a boy several years older than him, and much larger. After Hans had finished with his little art project, Casimir was lying on the floor crying in a pool of his own blood, while Igor was struggling with

the loss of his balls. Hans shifted from a cruel expression to a concerned one as he checked on Veronika's condition.

"Veronika, take my hand. Let us leave this place and go see Ewald. He will make you better!"

Upon seeing the kind and concerned look on Hans' face after his valiant act of defending her, Veronika felt as if she had suddenly developed feelings for the boy who had just previously lifted her skirt and made her cry. Hans did not wait for an answer and quickly led the girl away from her captors. When the Imperial Guard finally arrived on the scene, they would be dumbfounded by the events that had occurred. After maiming the Grand Duke of Moscow and his military advisor, Hans would garner a nickname among the servants of the Royal Palace, and that was the term "Little Monster."

Chapter 659 - It's About Sending a Message

Shortly after the incident with the Grand Duke of Moscow, Hans was summoned to his father's study. The boy had taken Veronika to the Court Physician of the Royal Family. Though he initially refused to leave the girl's side as Ewald looked after her, the Imperial Guard ultimately forced him to do so.

Veronika was in good hands. After all, Ewald had learned the basics of modern medicine from Berengar, and had even begun to use surgeries to cure certain conditions. The Princess of Bohemia was not beaten too badly, and because of that, she just needed a small amount of treatment.

As for Hans, he was sitting with a fiercely defiant glare in Berengar's office. His mother was standing next to his father as the two of them castigated him for his behavior. Berengar was furious. His own son had maimed a boyar of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, as well as the Grand Duke. Berengar struggled to calm his wrath as he took a quick swig from his flask before getting the words right in his head.

"So let me get this straight... You castrated a Boyar and maimed the Grand Duke of Moscow. Do you have any idea the damage this will cause in relations between Germany and the various Rus states? Give me one good reason why I should not kick your ass right now!"

Despite the outrageous actions Hans had taken, he was firm in the belief that his actions were righteous, and thus he did not back down from his father's fearsome threat as he outlined his exact reasoning for being so extreme.

"I only did what father would have done if some Slavic bastard had dared to lay his hands on mother!"

Berengar and Linde were taken aback by this statement. It had been a few minutes since the incident occurred, and they had yet to conduct a proper investigation into the matter. It was because of this that Berengar continued to interrogate his eldest child for his horrific actions.

"How so?"

Hans' lips curved into an arrogant sneer as he outlined exactly why he had acted so ruthlessly towards the Muscovite delegation.

"That effeminate bastard laid his hands on my woman. I was returning to my room from the Cadet Corps when I heard Veronika scream, I quickly investigated the scene only to find that Slavic cunt hitting my girl, I tried to force my way into the room to stop him but his bodyguard halted my advance, so I had no

choice. I held him hostage with my blade and told him if he did not let me pass, then I would feed his manhood to the pigs. He refused to do so, so I stabbed him in the balls."

Linde gazed in horror at Hans's words. He was just a little boy and yet he had acted so violently. More importantly, she was furious at the type of vulgar language he was using and was quick to condemn him.

"Hans, language!"

Upon seeing that his mother was furious, the boy put on a pitiful facade and apologized for his harsh words.

"I'm sorry, mommy..."

Berengar sneered in disdain when he saw through the act of his errant child. However, he was more fascinated with the tale his son was spinning. He immediately inquired further about the topic.

"What happened next?"

Hans continued to meet his father's gaze as he outlined everything that had happened between him and Casimir.

"I was furious, so I decided to give that Slavic dog a personal reminder as to what happens when he dares to defy the Reich! After carving a smile on his face, I left with Veronika to seek medical treatment. Can you honestly say you would have done less if you were in my position?"

Berengar could not deny that he would have behaved any better if one of his women were targeted. As he reflected more on the incident, he realized it was highly likely that Casimir beat Veronika because she had refused his advances. It was because of this that he left out a heavy sigh before punishing his child for his violent behavior.

"Under these circumstances, I will confine you to your room until an investigation into the matter can be completed. If you are lying to me, you will be severely punished. If, however, you are telling the truth, I will be lenient. After all, a man must protect his woman from those who would harm her, and I will not fault you for acting in such a manner when I would have done worse."

Hans smiled upon hearing his father's decision and bowed his head slightly before thanking him for his benevolence.

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"You have my thanks, father. I promise that everything I have said is true, as you will find out soon enough."

After saying this, the boy departed from the study and returned to his room. As for Berengar, he was left with a major headache, while Linde was suffering from complex emotions. Upon learning the truth, she could not find fault with her son for his actions, but she still believed he went too far.

Nevertheless the boy had outsmarted both of them, and used his father's nature against them. Berengar poured himself a proper drink into his skull chalice that he had not used in some time before commenting on the situation.

"That boy is too smart for his own good..."

Linde merely scoffed at her husband's remarks before inquiring about what their next move was.

"Obviously, we can't use the Grand Duchy of Moscow to deal with the Golden Horde now! What shall we do about this?"

Berengar took a large gulp from his whiskey before commenting on the situation. After everything that had happened, his plans for the future were now in ruin. He could only think of an alternative course of action.

"There have bound to be some loyalists to Casimir's late father in his court. We could use them to depose the boy and establish a new regime that is hellbent on the destruction of the Golden Horde. Either that or we will have to focus our efforts on one of the other Rus states, like Kiev or Novgorod."

Linde remained silent as she reflected on everything that had occurred. She still could not believe her baby boy had reacted so viciously to the Grand Duke of Moscow and his military advisor. Perhaps Berengar's extreme nature was setting a poor example for her children.

Despite this possibility, she still could not pin the blame on the man. In the end, she loved that aspect about Berengar, and would not rebuke him for it. Berengar, on the other hand, had a goal in mind as he grasped hold of his wife's hand and comforted her.

"For now, we need to determine if what our son said is true or not. It should be a simple matter. Find Veronika and check on her condition. The boy said he had sought medical treatment for her. If she is in such poor condition, then she will be in Ewald's clinic. I want you to investigate this matter yourself. You're the only person I can trust to find the truth."

Linde nodded her head before responding to Berengar's command.

"I will get right on it."

After saying that, she kissed her man on the lips before departing from his study. It was only after she had left the room that he cursed Casimir for his foolish behavior.

"Stupid child, who do you think you are? Forcing yourself upon my ward! When I find out the truth of the matter, you will not be let off with a simple disfigurement. The boy was too lenient with you. He should have claimed your life..."

Thinking back on his past life, Berengar could not help but shake his head. At the end of the second world war the Red army raped between two to four million german girls an average of sixty times per girl. It was one of the greatest war crimes of the war, and nobody ever talked about it. Upon reflecting on this, he sighed and spoke his thoughts on the matter aloud.

"Some things never change..."

With this said, he formulated a plan for how to make an example of Casimir. As Berengar's ward, Veronika was under his protection, and not only did his guest from the east attempt to force himself on the girl, he had severely beaten her. Such a thing was a massive slap to the face of Berengar and the German Empire as a whole.

This could not go unpunished. If Berengar let this matter go, the Reich would become a joke in the eyes of the east. He had decided that if the investigation revealed that Hans was speaking the truth, he would have the Grand Duke of Moscow castrated and sent to a labor camp for the rest of his miserable existence.

A permanent disfigurement to the face was not the message Berengar wanted to send to the Russians. Instead, he wanted them to know the price of laying their hands on German girls, even if Veronika was technically Bohemian.

Chapter 660 - Rus' Response

Weeks passed since the incident between Hans and Casimir, the matter was thoroughly investigated by Linde herself, as well as Imperial Intelligence. In the end, Hans's words were proven to be true. As a result, Berengar convicted the Grand Duke of Moscow with one count of attempted rape of a minor, and one count of assault of a minor. In the end, Casimir was castrated and sentenced to life in prison. Which meant he would spend the rest of his days in a labor camp.

With this action, Berengar had proved to the people of Germany that even foreign monarchs were not above the law. Though he had proved in the past that the German nobility suffered the same penalties as the common people for the crimes they committed. This was the first major incident of a foreign monarch being condemned under German Law.

The Rus States were furious at such an action, and multiple kingdoms condemned Berengar because of it. In the end, he simply responded with a snarky remark about Germany being a sovereign nation that did not recognize diplomatic immunity. If you committed a crime in the Reich, no matter what your position in life, you would pay the price for your actions.

As for Igor, he was being looked after until a time where he could be deported back to Moscow. He had suffered grievous wounds from the Prince's blade, and would never recover his reproductive abilities. Hans, on the other hand, was cleared of all wrongdoing.

The reason was simple: he was a young boy, who was protecting his fiancée from a would be rapist. Such action was deemed by the German people as morally righteous, even if the Ministry of Propaganda had covered up the extent of what he had done.

Berengar was now faced with a diplomatic crisis in the east. Despite being Orthodox and tied to the Byzantine Empire, the Rus states were now threatening diplomatic action against Berengar and the German Empire. The extent of what they planned to do was unknown. Regardless, it would appear his plans to utilize the Rus states to deal with the golden horde had been thoroughly crushed.

Instead, there was talk among several of the larger Rus states into unification. If Germany could unite into a world power, then why couldn't they? This was easier said than done, and without German or Byzantine support, the Rus would have a hard time keeping up with the western powers. Still, Berengar considered this a threat to National Security and had tasked Imperial Intelligence with the difficult job of hampering the process.

Currently in the East, within the Novgorod Republic, a middle-aged man sneered in disdain as he read about what had happened between his nephew and Berengar. He could hardly believe that the child of his fearsome brother had behaved so recklessly.

"That German bastard Berengar the Accursed has mutilated my nephew and sentenced him to life imprisonment. This is not just a slap in the face to my house, but all the Rus! It is clear that a United Germany poses a threat to us all. In order to combat this Eagle that rises in the west, we must unite together to fight against them!"

He placed the letter down on the table and gazed at the various men who were gathered. Many among them were leaders of the various Rus States. The man who said these words was Prince Vladimir, and he was the leader of the Novgorod Republic, as well as the brother of the previous Grand Duke of Moscow. Despite acting furious, he was rather pleased with what Berengar had done to his nephew.

Vladimir had only recently inherited the position of Prince of Novgorod after his brother's death, stealing it from his nephew Casimir. One of the reasons Casimir had gone to Germany was to procure arms, not just to defeat the Golden Horde but to take back the territory his uncle had stolen from him. As for Vladimir, despite approving of what Berengar had done to his nephew, he now used this incident as a means to unite the Rus States under his banner.

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The various leaders of the Rus States gazed at Vladimir with complicated expressions. Many of them were fearful of fighting against the German Empire. After all, they were previously in a coalition with the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Golden Horde. They had seen what the Kingdom of Austria had done to those two powerhouses by themselves. Now that Germany had united under Austria's banner, it was not a simple matter to get on the bad side of the Reich.

However, there were also those in support of Vladimir's ambitions. German propaganda had made the idea of uniting into a single Empire popular, and it was because of this that many of the Rus states now desired a powerful Empire of their own. As it stood, Novgorod was the most powerful Rus State, and due to its trading ties with Northern Germany, they had become quite wealthy in recent years.

Wealthy enough to fund a sizeable army if they so desired. With the leaking of agricultural technology, and early industrial tech such as the puddling furnace by the late Prince Decentius of the Byzantine Empire, the amount of food that could be grown in Novgorod had doubled in size, and because of this they were expecting a large population boom in the current generation.

It was only a matter of time before they eclipsed their neighbors and established a Russian Empire of their own. Thus, many of the men in the room were hesitant, but not unwilling, to form a Russian Union. However, there was one man in particular who was completely against the idea, and that was the Grand Prince of Kiev, a young man by the name of Ivan.

Due to the proximity of his realm to the German Empire, he had long since established ties with the Reich. Albeit he had never personally met with Berengar in person, however, his lover was a German Spy, and though he did not realize this, she had been manipulating him recently to reject the idea of a unified Russia. With a frown on his face, he called out Vladimir for his ambitions.

"And who would lead this unified Russia? You? I object to the notion. First and foremost, you are a Usurper who bribed the electors of your realm to place you into power instead of your nephew. Secondly, you say that a united Germany is a threat to all of us. Yet the reality of the situation is that

Germany would only pose a threat to us if we first act against them. Casimir has been justly punished for his crimes, and since then the Kaiser has not made a single statement of hostility towards us.

His only response to your condemnation of his actions was that his Empire is a sovereign realm that does not recognize diplomatic immunity. Your nephew had broken German Law during his stay in the Empire and paid the price for it. I think you are inviting fear into this meeting because you simply wish to rule over us all!"

Vladimir was displeased with Ivan's response. The man had always been a thorn in his side, especially after he came to power as the Prince of Novgorod. He did not know why the Grand Prince of Kiev had decided to back the German Empire, but he was not going to let his ambitions fall into ruin because of this man. The only response he could come up with to counteract the man's claims was a personal insult.

"You know what I think, Ivan? I think you are afraid of Germany! You sit in your little Principality and cower in fear of the Germans that exist close to your borders. You are not fit to rule over your people, let alone all the Rus!"

In response to this, Ivan snarled before calling the man out on his words. He knew from the beginning that Vladimir would slander him in this meeting and came prepared for it.

"If Germany was hellbent on invading our lands, as you suggest, then why has the Kaiser taken action to secure his borders? You live far away from the German Empire, so allow me to educate you on the reality of the situation. On their eastern borders, the Germans have long since begun construction of massive border fortifications with their strange technology.

It is clear by these actions that they intend to be defensive and isolationist in nature. I have personally passed through the Grand Duchy of Vladimir and visited the German border on behalf of my neighbor. I have spoken with the soldiers there, and they have no ill intention of our land or people. You are stirring up trouble that none of us will be able to handle, even if we united into a single Empire. I know you grieve for your nephew, however I will not bear the cost of your warmongering, nor should the rest of you!"

Upon hearing this, many of the Rus leaders shifted their views towards Ivan's speech. If they united into a single Empire, they would be giving up a lot, especially in regard to personal power and wealth, for little in terms of gains. The only real benefit was an increase in military power under a unified Russia. However, this paled in comparison to the Armed Forces of the German Empire, who were a dominant power in all of Europe.

With this in mind, the discussion quickly broke down into petty squabbling. For now, the talks between the Rus States about Unification had ended in disappointment to the ambitious prince of Novgorod. Unknowingly, Berengar's influence had spread across Eastern Europe, and was actively preventing a unification of the Russian Empire. For how long they could continue this subterfuge that was unknown.