

# Tyranny of Steel

## Chapter 4

### *Chapter 4: A New Day*

The light of dawn shone down through the windows of the Castle's living quarters and onto Berengar's face. The moment the rays of the sunlight touched his face, he had awoken from his slumber. Sitting up while rubbing his shoulders, he yawned heavily, still tired from the previous day's workout. In fact, most of his body was sore. Nevertheless, that did not deter him from what he needed to do.

Berengar quickly got dressed into some simple loose-fitting clothes and began his daily exercise, which lasted for well over an hour. He was covered in sweat by the time he returned to the castle, and his entire muscular structure was aching. Only after bathing for half an hour did he feel comfortable enough to begin today's work.

His new attitude had shocked not only his family but also the servants of the Castle. Waking up early, exercising, eating meat, and taking an interest in the realm's affairs were all things that Berengar had rarely participated in. After his fever broke, he had become an entirely new person in the eyes of those who knew him.

This perception might not be entirely false, considering there were two sets of memories contained within Berengar's mind. Though he was unsure if he was still the same person he was before who had simply been enlightened by the memories and knowledge that Julian possessed, or if he was actually Julian inhabiting Berengar's body.

None of that truly mattered; after all, as he was concerned, his identity was that of Berengar von Kufstein, and he now had the potential to change his family's land into an industrial empire with the memories he gained from his near-death experience. Though it would take a large degree of time and effort to achieve, he was now convinced that it was his destiny to lead the Barony of Kufstein into the industrial age.

Truthfully as heir, he held little authority in the domain and could not keep lying to his father about where he came across such unique inventions; after all, the stubborn old man had not trusted his word and elected to search for an engineer who could verify the functionality of the designs. The man he was searching for had not arrived yet. Thus all Berengar could do was educate himself further on the matters of the realm.

The young lord had elected to have his meal within the confines of the Castle's library, where he went over important information regarding the history of the Barony's finances.

He was quickly dismayed by his findings. Despite being such a resource-rich region, the Barons of the von Kufstein family had failed to capitalize on it. He quietly shook his head as he closed the ledger and thought to himself.

'This is what happens when you leave a house of warriors to act as all-powerful administrators over a plot of land that is nearly 375 square miles in size and contains nearly 20,000 people.

He knew that they were limited to medieval technology, but despite being a region notable for its iron reserves, they had barely invested in the mining of such a valuable resource. What little that was mined had been sold as ores to large cities throughout the kingdom. There were far better uses for such materials.

The economy largely relied on subsistence agriculture; it was well and truly a backward feudal state. Even the nearby town was nothing more than an agricultural village with no substantial industry whatsoever. He was beginning to get a headache reading about how primitive his family's lands were.

Just when he was about to curse aloud, he noticed his little sister Henrietta hiding behind one of the bookcases while staring at him from afar. He nearly let out a chuckle as he spotted the girl eying him like a scared rabbit. Evidently, the changes in her older brother's behavior these past few days were frightening to the young girl. She was beginning to think he had been possessed.

Taking a sip from his glass of water, Berengar never shifted his attention from the ledgers he was reading. When the young girl thought she was safe from being noticed, he let out a sigh

"Henrietta, I know you're there..."

The young girl flinched upon hearing his words. She had been spotted by her older brother or the demon who had potentially taken his place. Thus she panicked and scrambled out of the library without saying a word. Berengar chuckled to himself as he saw the girl fleeing the scene; he could only guess what had compelled her to engage in this behavior. Nevertheless, now was not the time to concern himself with the trivial matters of children.

He spent much of the day in the library studying everything from the realm's financial affairs, agricultural and mining output, as well as powers of the region. As a low-ranking member of the nobility, there were powerful lords who ruled over his father. The von Kufsteins were direct vassals to the von Habsburgs who were the rulers of the Duchy of Austria, and the County of Tyrol.

Evidently, his younger brother Lambert was engaged to one of the daughters from a branch of the Von Habsburg family, which was considered a great honor for the house of von Kufstein. Interestingly enough, despite being the older brother and a fully grown

man Berengar remained unmarried and unbetrothed. Largely due to concerns over his health and whether or not he'd live long enough to father a child.

Berengar didn't mind such a fate; after all, in his previous life, he was a man who had completely and utterly failed to get a girlfriend well into his late twenties. Unless he made himself something of worth, he would fail to acquire a bride in this lifetime too. Though he was not concerned with such a possibility, his search for a bride would become much easier when he finally put on some muscle. By appearance alone, he was positive he could snag a beautiful bride, even if she was nothing but a commoner.

Although, he highly doubted his family would consent over such a union. After all, this was still the feudal age, and nobility did not marry commoners. Berengar set such matters aside for the time being. If he was to choose his own match, he would first need authority and physicality to back up his claims that he was now healthy. Both of which were a long way away from where he currently stood.

After spending the better half of the day going over the Realm's affairs, he noticed that the sun had already set and thus decided now would be a good time to inquire about his father's findings on his designs. Surely he must have inquired to an engineer already. There should be at least one of them serving his father.

The young lord placed the books back in their rightful places and left the library, walking down the castle's corridors until he reached the door to his father's study. Before he could even knock on it, he could overhear an unpleasant conversation between three men—one of which he recognized to be his father.

"I don't care what fancy background Ser Ingbert has; I have been in the field of engineering for over thirty years, and I say the designs are brilliant! They will function exactly as your son has described my liege!"

A scoff followed the Old Man's claim, followed by what sounded like a much younger voice "Sire, do not listen to this crotchety old man, he's a commoner. He does not have the education in which I have received. I assure you, these designs are nothing more than scribbles from a child who thinks he knows a thing or two about engineering."

Berengar could already tell by that one statement that the man who had said such a thing about the Bessemer converter was a moron relying on a lofty background to obtain his position. Ultimately his father did not disappoint him; after hearing both of his engineers discuss the designs let out a long sigh before asserting his authority.

"Ser Ingbert, you may leave us now. I have much to discuss with my head Engineer" Though Alex could not see it, he could guess the expression on the fool's face right now and smiled with satisfaction. Suddenly, the door swung open, and he was face to face with the man known as Ser Ingbert.

The man was in his late twenties and had light brown hair in the form of a ponytail with green eyes. He dressed in an overly embellished doublet signaling the wealth he possessed. He was exactly the kind of pampered twat Berengar had expected to see. After examining the ring on his finger, which displayed a boar's head engraved upon it, Berengar could guess the identity of the man before him.

The man's name was Ingbert Heltzer, and he was the son of one of Sieghard's knights. Just as Berengar had a guess, the man had achieved his position as one of his father's engineers solely because of his background. Even by this world's standards, Inberbert's knowledge of engineering was a joke. A pampered noble like him had no need to pay attention to his studies well enough to become competent in such a field.

After seeing the young man, he had just passively slandered, Ingbert's face turned sour. The last thing he wanted was to see the Baron's son standing outside the door, overhearing his discourteous remarks. Nevertheless, the damage had been done, and Berengar merely gazed upon Ingbert like he was looking at a fool.

After Ingbert stormed off in a fit of rage, Berengar overheard his father's authoritative voice from behind the door.

"You may enter."

Evidently, the old Baron had been aware of his son's existence outside the study's door the entire time. Now that Berengar had entered the study, he found himself being gazed at intensely by his father and an old man within his late fifties who he understood to be the head engineer of the Barony.

With these two authorities staring him down, Berengar could not help but feel nervous as if he was about to be scolded...