

## Steel 271

### *Chapter 271: Arriving in Granada*

The clear blue skies shone above the province of Istria. Within the city of Trieste, Berengar stood at the port. In front of him was a large three-masted clipper. This ship was a transport vessel Berengar used to sell his wares across the Mediterranean over the last couple of months.

Though Berengar intended to create a massive Royal Clipper for his family's travel in the near future, it was secondary to the concerns of establishing a Naval Armada and a large trade fleet. All he could do for now was to use one of his standard trading vessels that had been completed as his means of transport.

Despite the fact that Berengar was inching ever closer to his dreams to discover the new world in this timeline, it would still be a few months before he was fully prepared for such a venture. Thus, Berengar intended to construct a large and powerful fleet before he ventured westward into unknown parts. At the moment, Berengar was working towards his other goal of independence by establishing an alliance with the Emirate of Granada.

Not only were the moors who inhabited the region instrumental in distracting Iberian Catholics from joining in on the upcoming crusade against Berengar and his Duchy, but by providing them with sufficient arms to protect themselves against their Catholic neighbors, Berengar could delay the Reconquista. With this, Berengar could prevent Spain and Portugal from becoming significant rivals in the colonization of the new world.

After gazing upon the mighty vessel with a sense of admiration, Berengar felt a pair of dainty arms wrap around him; these, of course, belonged to his future bride Adela. The young girl had grown immensely in the past few years since Berengar first arrived in this world.

Though she was not as busty as Honoria or Linde, she had developed into a stunning young woman. Adela had a solid B-Cup-sized chest and a petite stature. She was slim, and in a way, Berengar found this quite appealing. If one were to have a harem of women, it would be ideal to have some variety.

Adela was dressed in a sapphire blue dress with golden accents. The jewelry she wore was a mix of fine gold and sapphires, which highlighted her matching eyes perfectly. She still wore her twin-tail hairstyle, and Berengar found this to be quite adorable.

After taking in the breathtaking image of his young fiancée, Berengar smiled before greeting the young woman.

"You have truly become a gorgeous young woman Adela; I can hardly wait until the day we are married."

Throughout these past few years, Adela had worked hard to become someone who could aid Berengar in his work as a Head of State. Thus she had become quite efficient in Diplomacy and Administration. Berengar was aware of her growth in these aspects and had personally requested her for this diplomatic visit to Granada.

When Adela heard Berengar's kind words, she bowed respectfully before responding with a formal greeting. After all, they were still in public, and thus she felt it inappropriate to refer to Berengar by his first name.

"You honor me, your grace!"

After their initial greeting was over, Berengar grabbed ahold of Adela and hugged her; he did not care for formal etiquette, especially when it was with one of the girls he loved. Adela, on the other hand, began to flush red with embarrassment, but she did not pull herself out of Berengar's grasp; after all, she craved his attention, and now she was finally receiving it without any form of interference.

After holding onto Adela for some time, Berengar whispered in her ear.

"It's been too long..."

The couple shared the intimate moment for a few moments before Berengar finally broke away and got down to business.

"Well, are you ready to depart?"

To this, Adela nodded her head silently before her servants began to carry her luggage onto the vessel. Berengar walked alongside Adela while holding her little hand in his own as they stepped onto the ship that would transport them to Granada.

After stepping onto the vessel, Berengar led Adela below deck where her quarters were awaiting her; while the two of them were on board the ship, the captain's quarters were allotted to Berengar, and the first mate's cabin was given to Adela.

These cabins were large enough to host a queen-sized bed within them; as for the ship's captain, he stayed in one of the other cabins, and so too did his officers. After settling in, the boat began to depart. Berengar stayed within the saloon alongside Adela for the time being, where they continued to catch up on the events since their last meeting, which was not long ago on her fifteenth birthday.

Days would pass before they finally arrived in Granada; due to the unrivaled speed of the clippers, the journey from Istria to Iberia was substantially shorter than if they took one of the more contemporary vessels like the carrack or caravel.

When the three-masted clipper finally docked at the port city of Motril, they did not stay long. Instead, they immediately got into a caravan and rode up to the capital city of Granada, where the Sultan and his family resided.

After several days of travel, Berengar and his host arrived at the Granadan Royal Court, where the Sultan welcomed him with open arms. The man was even younger than Berengar, from his appearance, he was no older than nineteen.

Hasan had recently inherited his position from his late father. He had a handsome clean-shaven face with lightly tanned skin and shoulder-length dark hair. The young man also had eyes the color of chocolate.

As the Sultan of Granada, Hasan was an ethnic Berber. Medieval Europeans used the term moor to describe a group of people from North Africa mainly comprised of a mix of Arabs and Berbers, and to a limited extent, their sub-

Saharan African slaves and mercenaries that were primarily taken from the areas that would be known in Berengar's previous life as Mali, and Niger.

Upon seeing the extravagantly dressed Duke of Austria enter through his Palace Gates, the man who ruled over the Emirate of Granada greeted Berengar in a traditional Islamic fashion.

"As-Salaam-Alaikum, oh great Duke of Austria!"

Though the man spoke in Arabic, Berengar had a translator nearby, however much to the surprise of everyone present, Berengar returned his greeting with an appropriate response.

"Wa-Alaikum-Salaam, mighty Sultan of Granada."

Due to Berengar's tenure in Afghanistan, he knew a bit of the Arabic tongue. Despite the fact that Arabic was a minority language in Afghanistan, Berengar had spent many of his years there learning the language.

The reason was that it was a more common tongue throughout the world than Pashtun or Dari, and thus after his service, he could potentially bring it into his professional life. Though it was a far more modern variant than the version spoken in Medieval Iberia; he could still vaguely get his words across.

Adela was also surprised that Berengar seemed to know how to speak Arabic, at least to some degree, and gazed curiously at her fiancé as he addressed the Sultan as if he were a long-lost friend.

"When I received your invitation to visit your Royal Palace, I was quite excited. I think there is much our two peoples can accomplish if we work together."

Upon hearing this, Hasan began to chuckle and nodded his head

"I look forward to discussing our people's future together. Tell me, who is this beautiful young woman next to you?"

Berengar grabbed ahold of Adela's shoulder in response to the Sultan's words and dragged her in close to him before declaring her position in his life.

"This is Adela von Graz, daughter of Marquess Otto von Graz and my fiancée. We will be married next year."

The Sultan nodded his head as he heard this before responding to Berengar's claims.

"You are truly a lucky man, Duke Berengar; I also have a beautiful bride; it would appear that we have more in common than I initially thought."

After saying this, the Sultan personally led Berengar, Adela, and their host into his palace, introducing the magnificent structures and grandiose furnishings along the way. After a while, they stopped at the dining hall, where a meal was being prepared.

"Come, sit, enjoy Dinner with my family and me; you must be starving after such a long journey."

Upon hearing this, Berengar did not refuse, and as such, he nodded politely before pulling out Adela's seat, allowing her to sit down at the table gracefully, where he then sat next to her. Before long, Berengar and his host as well as the Royal Family of Granada had gathered in the dining hall to share a meal.

This would be the first of many discussions that would occur during Berengar's visit to Granada. With Adela by his side, Berengar was confident in coming to an agreement that would be beneficial to both himself and the Emirate of Granada. Though whether such an alliance would occur was yet to be seen.

#### *Chapter 272: Negotiations with the Sultan of Granada*

Berengar and Adela sat at the Sultan of Granada's table, enjoying food that was unique to the culture. Berengar had never tasted such delicacies before, and as an avid foodie, he was enjoying it to his heart's content.

On the other hand, Adela was slightly worried at the gazes she was receiving from some of the more traditional members of Hasan's dynasty. The unwelcome looks afforded to her resulted from Berengar's refusal to force his young fiancée to wear a hijab; it was a matter of principle to him.

Hasan was far more secular than many of the people in Granada, and because of this, he had allowed Adela to walk around freely in his territory without some form of face covering. In his eyes, she was a Christian woman and a diplomat, and it would be rude of him to force such traditions on foreigners like the Austrian host.

This lack of devotion to the traditions and the Islamic faith was a point of contention among many other members of Hasan's dynasty, and they had begun to plot in the shadows against the young Sultan.

Though alcohol was not served at the feast, Berengar enjoyed himself nonetheless. He took a break from the roasted lamb to discuss matters of importance between himself and Hasan. After all, a banquet was an excellent opportunity to discuss business.

"Tell me, your majesty, what is the current situation like with your neighbors? I have heard that the Iberian Catholics are attempting to conquer Granada. All I hear is Catholic propaganda about how it is a matter of time before Granada is reclaimed for Christendom, so I would like to hear your opinion about the ongoing war efforts."

While Berengar spoke in German, his words were translated to Hasan by a translator hired by the Royal Court of Granada for this special occasion. Likewise, Berengar himself had a translator to convert the Arabic words of the Sultan into German so that he could adequately understand them.

The differences between modern Arabic and Medieval Arabic were too significant for Berengar to overcome; after all, he was not even fluent in the modern dialect. Thus the conversation between the two men was carried on by the duo of translators that both parties had hired.

Hasan was willing to meet with Berengar because he was aware of the German Reformation that Berengar had spurred and that he was enemies with the Catholic faith; in a way, they held similar positions.

Surrounded by hostile neighbors, relying on their means to defend their territory, they would be natural allies if they weren't so far apart. However, Hasan was not willing to reveal the complete difficulty he was facing against the Catholics of Castille, Aragon, and Portugal.

The reasons for this were relatively simple; for starters, he was currently negotiating an agreement with Berengar. The benefits he could obtain were purely based upon the show of force he could provide. In reality, his position was relatively poor, barely holding onto the territory he currently had.

However, he would never reveal this, and as such, the young Sultan proudly declared his armies' capability.

"Despite being surrounded by enemies on all sides, we are holding out well enough. This is a war against our faith, and the soldiers of Granada will never fall so long as they have faith in Allah!"

Berengar nodded when he heard this; he knew that the Sultan would never accept Christian soldiers on his land as military aid. However, Berengar did not plan to do such a thing, as it would be an open declaration of war against the Catholic world; instead, he touched upon the weakness of Granada that he knew they were facing.

"That is good to hear; I would be beside myself if your mighty Kingdom fell against those self-righteous Catholics. Tell me, how are your logistics? Are you able to properly supply your soldiers with food, water, and arms? If not, I would be more than happy to provide material support for your cause."

When the members of Hasan's dynasty heard this, they were surprised. Berengar may not be a Catholic, but he was still Christian; the idea of a Christian ruler aiding the Muslim Kingdom against other Christians was practically unheard of; at least when it came to European affairs.

The Sultan began to discuss among his advisors such a possibility before asking for clarification. After several moments of discussion where Berengar and Adela were merely eating their meal in peace, Hasan began to ask some of the questions on his mind.

"You would provide us material aid? In what way?"

A smirk began to curve itself upon Berengar's lips when he heard this, the Sultan had taken the bait, and as such, he could start to negotiate on his terms.

"I can provide arms, armor, and even food. You will not need to worry about supplies taking months to arrive; my transport ships are the fastest in the world and can sail from Trieste to Motril within a matter of days."

The Granadan host was shocked to hear this, such speeds were unheard of in this period, yet it was confirmed that they had arrived in Granada relatively quickly. As such, the Sultan contemplated upon this for a few moments before asking another one of his questions.

"When you say arms, what exactly would you be willing to provide us with?"

Berengar drank from the chalice that was filled with water, quenching his parched throat and washing down the roasted lamb before responding to this particular question. His answer, if agreed upon, would change the balance of power within Iberia. After taking his sweet time to respond, Berengar wiped his mouth with the napkin before doing so.

"I can provide you with pikes and arkebuse firearms for your infantry; in terms of artillery, I can assist you with falconet cannons; these are weapons of my invention that fire a one-pound cannonball.

Despite its small size, it can bring down a castle wall far quicker than traditional siege methods if used in large numbers or repeated barrages. If necessary, I can even send some of my officers to advise you on the tactics and strategies needed to wield such weapons properly."

While the two men were conversing their negotiations, Adela was observing; she watched the reactions of the other members of the Sultan's dynasty. Though it went unnoticed by both Berengar and Hasan, the worried expressions on their faces did not get by Adela's sharp gaze.

She could instantly tell that something was going on behind the scenes of the Sultan's family, and whatever it could be, it did not bode well for Berengar and his plans. As such, she decided she would properly inform Berengar of these issues when they were alone.

Ultimately the Sultan decided to halt the negotiations; for now, such a substantial promise of support would have to be thoroughly considered; after all, the man was sharp and was not desperate enough to accept such lofty



conditions without thinking it through. Thus he announced his decision while maintaining the dignity of a Sultan.

"Your words intrigue me, but I will need some time to consider your offer; in the meantime, feel free to treat my home as if it were your own. I look forward to our further discussions on this matter."

Berengar smiled and nodded before taking a drink from his chalice. He knew he would not reach an agreement at the first discussion. Thus he was well prepared for this. The shifty gazes of Hasan's family did not go unnoticed by Berengar. However, he assumed they were simply nervous about dealing with an infidel, and thus he let it pass for now.

After finishing the meal, Berengar, Adela, and their host were led to the quarters allotted to them during their stay. Upon entering his room and lying down on the bed, Berengar heard a knock on his door. He quickly got up from his short rest before opening it, where he noticed Adela standing with a worried expression.

"Can I come in?"

Berengar thought about it for a moment before silently nodding his head and allowing the girl entry to his room. After doing so, he shut the door and sat down on his bed, where he beckoned his future wife to sit by his side.

Adela followed as instructed, and after a few moments of silence, she revealed the thoughts on her mind to Berengar.

"Something is going on with the Sultan's family. I may not be as talented in the affairs of intrigue as Linde, but I can tell they are plotting something behind the Sultan's back. If you wish to secure this Alliance with Granada, it would be wise to investigate this conspiracy silently.

If they plan to assassinate Hasan, then you need to prevent it by any means necessary. Not only is this likely to foster a friendship between you and the Sultan, but it will also secure his power in the region."

Berengar was shocked when he heard this; however, he noticed their nervous expressions; though he did not even think of such a possibility, thinking back

upon their looks disdain when the Sultan entertained Berengar's idea of support, it started to make sense.

Luckily for him, Berengar had brought several members of his intelligence agency; the reason for this was simple, Linde wanted to keep an eye on him if he did something foolish like flirt with the princess of Granada.

However, the Sultan's sister was wrapped head to toe in a burka, and Berengar could not lust for her. As such, Berengar and Adela had begun to intertwine themselves with the affairs of the Royal Granadan Court and would soon be involved in a grand conspiracy, one whose plot had yet to be revealed.

### *Chapter 273: Conspiring Against the Sultan*

Late into the night, there was a secret gathering of high-ranking officials within the Emirate of Granada. The Sultan's brother and several advisors were gathered in a part of the Castle where they discussed their treasonous thoughts in hushed voices.

Yusuf Al-Fadl was the younger brother of the Sultan; however, in his mind, his conspiracy that he had established was not a matter of succession; it was a matter of faith. As a religious fundamentalist, he had seen both his elder brother and his father before him spiral into damnation by secular rule.

The fact that Hasan entertained the idea of military aid from an infidel while feasting on pork and drinking wine in his spare time was bad enough; however, the Sultan had allowed Adela, a woman, to walk around uncovered, in his eyes, it was simply disgraceful, and the Sultan's lack of faith had gone too far.

As such, he was quietly conversing with his co-conspirators in a hidden passage within the Castle of Granada. Beside him was the Marshal of the Realm, the Spymaster, and the spiritual advisor who happened to be a high-ranking Imam.

Their reason for the gathering was simple; now that a foreign Christian ruler was staying within the Castle, they had finally found a scapegoat to pin their plot to assassinate the Sultan on. This scapegoat also acted as the perfect way to establish a theocratic caliphate within the territory of Granada.

Yusuf was the first to voice his concerns to his fellow conspirators.

"Hasan must die! In particular, he must die while this infidel of a Duke stays within our territory. If we can blame him as the assassin, then we can rally the faithful against the idea of Christian intervention in our lands and establish our Caliphate once and for all!"

The Imam was the next to voice his discontent with the current situation.

"The Sultan has gone too far, he allows a woman to walk around freely without escort, and she is even left uncovered; such blasphemy can not be tolerated! We must remove Hasan as quickly as possible!"

The other conspirators nodded their heads in agreement upon hearing this. All of these men were a part of the Islamic Fundamentalist faction. They were willing to die to see the secularism they viewed as cancer upon their realm thoroughly removed from society.

Ultimately, the Spymaster came up with the first plan to assassinate the current Sultan of Granada; in his hands was a vial of clear liquid; it was an odorless and tasteless poison that Berengar had once used on his father's Marshal.

"This is a lethal concentration of the poison known as arsenic; if we put it in Hasan's wine, he will never know that he devoured it. After he is dead, we can blame the poisoning on this Duke Berengar from Austria! We won't need to fabricate too much evidence; after all, the people will easily buy the idea of a Christian assassinating the Sultan!"

On the other hand, the Marshal disagreed with this point, why assassinate the Sultan with poison when they can get one of the house guards to kill him. As such, he voiced his disapproval of this plan immediately and offered a counter solution.

"Poison has a chance of failure; a loyal soldier with a blade is more likely to succeed. We should utilize one of the members of the House Guard who swears loyalty to the faith to kill the Sultan, then plant the bloodied blade among Berengar's possessions. This way, there is irrefutable "proof" that the Duke of Austria is responsible for the Sultan's death!"

Upon hearing two potential options for assassination, the leaders of the conspiracy began to fight among themselves to determine the most effective solution to their current predicament. While these men bickered among themselves, they were completely unaware that they were being observed by a pair of icy blue eyes not far away.

After Berengar and Adela finished their chat, Berengar immediately set his agents to task with infiltrating the Castle and spying on the most likely suspects of the conspiracy. After dressing in all black and waiting for the night, the agents began to blend in with the dimly lit corridors and successfully followed the conspirators to their meeting place.

The men who planned to assassinate the Sultan had no way of knowing that everything they said was observed and documented by this Austrian agent. While this agent watched the conspirators, the men involved continued to fight among themselves until they reached a decision. Yusuf was the one to finalize the decision, and as such, spoke with authority on the matter.

"We will use poison to eliminate the Sultan silently; then we will plant a vial of the substance among Berengar's belongings. He will be completely unaware that we are framing him and will make the perfect scapegoat. Tomorrow night, at the negotiations, we will enact our plan. The royal cupbearer will be alerted of our decision and will spike Hasan's drink with the poison."

Despite the earlier disagreement, all of the men present nodded their heads in affirmation of the plot to assassinate the Sultan and, shortly after that, departed from the scene of their conspiracy. It was only after they all had left that the agent scurried back to Berengar's quarters, triple-checking along the way to make sure he was not observed.

After the coast was clear, he knocked on Berengar's door in a specific way that symbolized he was a member of Berengar's Intelligence Agency. He then slid the document that he had written recording the Conspirators' conversation underneath the door.

Afterward, the man disappeared into the darkness and returned to his quarters; his actions were completely unnoticed by the Conspirators. As Berengar read the information, he had a smile on his face before lighting the note aflame with a candle.

If things turned for the worst, he did not plan to have written evidence of the conspiracy to assassinate the Sultan, even if it were in the form of recording the actual conspirator's conversation. Thus Berengar hatched a plan to spend the next day alongside Hasan and closely watched him to make sure that none of the assassination plots that had been hatched against him came to fruition.

Granada was crucial to his plans for the future, and he could not allow it to fall into a state of Islamic fundamentalism. At this moment, he began to hatch a goal to investigate and reveal the conspiracy between the Sultan's brother and several of his councilmen. By doing so, he hoped to gain the favor of the Sultan and forge an alliance between the two.

After thinking of his plan, Berengar went to sleep; for the first time in a long time, he was utterly alone at night, making him quite irritable. Eventually, the dawn rose, and Berengar was up bright and early; as usual, he was awake long before the members of his house were.

Thus he got out of bed and decided to go for a walk. He traversed the Castle's grounds before stumbling upon Hasan awake and hard at work in his study. Interestingly enough, the man had the same habits as Berengar, awakening early and getting to work as soon as possible.

As such, Berengar knocked on his door, which alerted the man to his presence. The moment he looked up and gazed upon Berengar's figure with a look of confusion on his face, he inquired about it.

"Duke Berengar, what are you doing up so early? Did you not sleep well? Was there something wrong with your accommodations? If they are not to your liking, I can have them changed immediately!"

To this, Berengar merely shook his head before responding to the young Sultan with a smile on his face.

"On the contrary, I was quite pleased with the room I was provided with; it was extremely comfortable. I wake up at this time every day, where I usually get some exercise in before getting straight to work."

Upon hearing this, a smile formed across Hasan's face as he got up from his seat and greeted his guest.

"We truly do have much in common."

In response to this, Berengar nodded his head before asking the Sultan the question on his mind.

"Would you like to join me? I know a few exercises that are great for your health; like I always say, "a healthy body creates a healthy mind!"

Thinking about it for a few moments, Hasan eventually smiled and nodded before speaking his thoughts.

"Sure, I was not involved in anything too important anyways."

The Duke of Austria and the Sultan of Granada went for a run; afterward, they began to do pushups, situps, squats, and pullups. By the time they were done with the morning exercise, Hasan was exhausted and in dire need of something to eat. Berengar and Hasan sat down at the breakfast table, covered in sweat, waiting for the morning meal to arrive.

With this small action, they had taken the first step to friendship.

#### *Chapter 274: Assembling a Crew I*

While Berengar and Adela were away at the Royal Court of Granada, Honoria was tasked with another objective. To put it simply, the runaway princess turned Privateer Queen was in the middle of searching for a crew.

At the moment, she was within the City of Kufstein; as per usual, she was flanked by Berengar's guards and protected from any possible threat. The beautiful white-haired princess was no longer dressed in some extravagant noblewoman's dress.

Instead, she was dressed in something loosely resembling the naval uniforms Berengar had provided to his sailors. His sailors were dressed like the old Elizabethan Seadogs from his previous life. However, Berengar had custom-designed uniforms for Honoria and her crew rather than have them outright cross-dress.

When designing Honoria's privateer attire, Berengar wanted something lightweight, comfy, and easy to move around in. Ultimately, what he created for her was a pair of slim black velvet breeches with minor golden embellishment and a couple of thigh-high black leather boots.

For her upper attire, she wore a charcoal gray silk shirt with a black velvet jerkin that was designed for the female body; this jerkin was slightly embellished with golden embroidery. Honoria did not feel like wearing a hat most of the time, but it would be a matching cavalier hat when she did.

Honoria also wore a black leather baldric that contained a frog for her sword scabbard to be attached to and a holster that held her four-shot repeating flintlock, which was based upon the Belton Flintlock action from Berengar's previous life.

These weapons were an enormous expense to produce, but Berengar had opted to outfit her and her crew with such expensive and effective weaponry for Honoria's safety. After all, if they ever found themselves in close quarter's combat with men, they would be at a severe disadvantage. Thus he felt the need to equip them with multi-shot weapons.

While Honoria was walking through the city of Kufstein, she noticed a young girl slightly younger than herself being forced to sweep outside a run-down shop. The girl had a pitiful look in her eye, and at the moment, there were a series of screams going on within the shop.

From one glance, Honoria could tell this girl was in some trouble and thus opted to approach her. However, despite doing so, the girl refused to look up from the ground as she swept. That is until the door slammed open, and a young man in extravagant attire walked out with a slip of paper in his hands.

This young man had a smug grin on his face as he boldly announced to the girl in front of him the fate that awaited her.

"Your parents have decided to pay off their debt to me by selling you into my service."

However, after saying this, the girl refused to do as she was told and continued to sweep outside the shop. She was aware that so long as the

Duke's guard were nearby, no harm could come to her, even from the hands of a nobleman.

The man had not seen Honoria or her guards. Instead, he was too focused on the young and cute girl who had taken his fancy. When the girl did not go willingly with him, the man resorted to violence. He latched upon her wrist and tried to force her away. Immediately the young girl resisted, and for doing so, the man slapped her across the face and began to raise his voice at the girl.

"You belong to me now! You are nothing more than a slave that I have purchased for my amusement, and you will do what you are told!"

When Honoria heard this, she began to frown and instantly approached the man. She was greatly displeased with this scene. For starters, Berengar had outright banned slavery; it was illegal and carried a punishment of twenty-five years to life.

There were many reasons for this, but to put it simply, Berengar wanted to avoid the centuries of domestic issues that followed American slavery in his previous life. Thus by holding what was little more than a slavery contract in his hands and boldly declaring that the young woman belonged to him, he was committing a serious offense.

Secondly, Honoria was against the idea of treating women as nothing more than slaves; after all, she had been lucky with Berengar, who allowed her a much greater degree of freedom than women of the period were typically allowed. Thus when she approached the man, she was far from in a diplomatic mood. Without even addressing the man, she ordered her guards at once.

"Guards, arrest this man! He has openly stated that he is engaging in slavery, and Duke Berengar has made his stance on such immoral acts abundantly clear!"

The moment the young nobleman heard this, he turned around with shock in his eyes. He had not even noticed Honoria or the guards nearby. By now, everyone in Kufstein was aware that Berengar had taken a white-haired beauty from the Byzantine Empire as a lover. As one of Berengar's women, Honoria held the authority to order her guards to act in such a manner.



The man immediately tried to declare his innocence. However, the guards grabbed hold of the man and sequestered him.

"You don't understand! This is not slavery! It is a simple business transaction; the girl will work off her parent's debt to me until it is fully repaid!"

However, Honoria was not buying his lame excuse and instead looked at the contract given to her by one of the guards who had seized it from the young nobleman. After reading it thoroughly, Honoria stated the conditions of the contract.

"In return for absolving the Schneider family of their debt owed to Oswald von Fieberbrunn, Landolf Schneider agrees to sell his daughter Elfrun into the service of Oswald von Fieberbrunn in perpetuity... A lifetime of service to a master that sounds like slavery to me!"

The man's eyes shrank as he heard this. This deal was supposed to be silent and secret, yet by chance, one of Berengar's lovers was walking by with her guards and witnessed the whole thing. He could be facing a minimum period of twenty-five years in a labor camp while, the maximum sentence carried for slavery was life imprisonment, which meant that he would be forced to work in back-breaking labor until he died.

Despite his Noble Status, under Berengar's legal reforms, he was not afforded any special treatment regarding the law; as such, the man was terrified of the outcome and began to panic. However, he was restrained well by the nearby guards who awaited the arrival of the law enforcement officers to take the man into custody. With no other options, the man began screaming at the young girl he had attempted to buy in a fit of fury.

"You bitch! You better pray I never escape! For if I do, you will die a bloody death!"

There were several eyewitnesses to this man's response, and he had foolishly just stated intent to murder the victim of his crime. Thus, to make an example of him and all potential slavers. Berengar's courts would eventually use this as an excuse to throw the book at the man and keep him in a labor camp until the day he died.

Though the man's family would protest these actions, there was nothing they could do in response to the overwhelming power Berengar held. After all, they were a minor noble family climbing the social ladder due to the wealth they gained from owning a few small businesses in Kufstein.

After the man was dragged away in chains by the law enforcement agents, Honoria approached the young girl named Elfrun, who was in tears. She was thankful that her life had been spared from a horrific experience of sexual slavery.

However, she also lamented the fact that her family was willing to condemn her to such a cruel fate due to their debt to the minor nobleman. With no options, the girl began to despair, and Honoria knew this to be the case. As such, she presented a viable alternative to the girl.

"You are a free woman now, and thus the choice of what you do in the future is up to you, but if I were you, I wouldn't want to stay with a family who so easily sold me into slavery either."

As Elfrun wept, she spoke the thoughts on her mind to the beautiful and comforting young woman next to her.

"I have nowhere else to go, but I can never look at my parents the same way after this!"

With a gentle smile on her face, Honoria clasped the girl's shoulder, causing her to look up at her with shock. Honoria proceeded to drag the girl into her arms and hugged her while stroking her long dirty blonde hair.

"If you have nowhere else to go, then you can join me. I am putting together a crew to set sail across the Mediterranean; adventure and glory await. Are you up to the task?"

Upon hearing this, Elfrun had a glimmer in her eyes; the offer enticed her, and as such, she swallowed her tears before nodding with firm resolve. Such a fate was better than lying around in Kufstein waiting to be sold off to another man.

"Aye..."

With that said, Honoria had gotten her first crew member, she just needed a few dozen more, and she would have a full-sized crew to man her future Sloop of War. Of course, training these wenches to be an effective Privateer Crew was another story entirely.

### *Chapter 275: Conspiring against the Conspirators*

After eating breakfast with the Sultan of Granada, Berengar took his morning bath. Though the bathhouse in the Castle of Granada was better than most, it still failed to compare to the elaborate design that Berengar had made for himself.

However, it was enough to get the job done, and after finishing his bath, Berengar got dressed in his extravagant attire before regrouping with Adela. The young woman looked visibly stressed as if she had been contemplating what actions to take during the entirety of her sleep.

Nevertheless, Berengar grabbed ahold of his little fiancée and shoved her into his arms as he stroked her silky golden hair. The girl had just left her quarters before running into Berengar, and as such, she was curious about the intelligence Berengar could collect in the previous night.

As such, she looked around cautiously to make sure nobody else was nearby before asking the question in her mind in a calm voice.

"What did you find out?"

Berengar nuzzled his cheek against her to put on a show of affection. If anyone were secretly watching their moves, they would think the two were embracing each other like a couple usually did. After getting close to her ears, he whispered to his little fiancée.

"It is worse than we thought, Yusuf the younger brother of Hasan, and at least three of his ministers are involved in a plot to assassinate the Sultan and pin the blame onto us. They intend to create a theocratic Caliphate here in Grenada."

Though Adela was shocked to hear this, she played the part of a fiancée who was being doted on by her future husband, and as such, she did not make any facial expressions to indicate her true feelings.

"When do they plan to do it?"

Berengar danced around with Adela slightly as he kissed her forehead before speaking further about the plans.

"Tonight at Dinner, they intend to poison Hasan's drink. The cupbearer is part of the conspiracy. I have already dispatched my agents to gather more intelligence; we can not allow this to unfold."

After saying this, Berengar broke away from the long hug and held onto Adela's hand tightly while acting as if they were not just conspiring.

"Well, my love, I think it is time for you to get some breakfast. I have already eaten with the Sultan, but I will accompany you anyway."

With this, Adela nodded and followed Berengar to the Dining Hall, where the rest of Hasan's dynasty were busy eating breakfast. As for Berengar, he silently observed the discussions that were taking place at the table.

After a while, the meal was over, and Adela and Berengar were free to return to their business. Berengar searched for the Sultan and eventually found him in his study once more. As such, Berengar decided to investigate whether Hasan knew he was being conspired against. Thus, he shut the door behind him as he began to question the young Sultan in a not too obvious way.

Berengar had brought his translator with him, though the topic they would be discussing was confidential, the man who Berengar used as a translator was from his own court, and was someone Berengar could trust with critical information. As such he began to speak with Hasan while his words were translated into Arabic.

"Pardon me if it is not my place, but I get the feeling that some of your ministers are not exactly welcome to the idea of me staying here..."

When Hasan heard this, he began to frown, not over Berengar's choice of words, but because Berengar was correct when he said that; as such, he sighed heavily before resting his face in his hands. It was only after a few moments that Hasan began to speak.

"My brother is a deeply religious person and is foolish enough to believe that the Imams should run the state. I do not know where he got such beliefs.

What I know is that he is deeply disturbed by our family's more secular nature as rulers. Thus, he has been conspiring with my more fanatical advisors for some time. I fear eventually they will make an attempt on my life.

I am sorry to trouble you with such things. I suppose you also must have a hard time at home; after all, you are one of the figureheads of the German Reformation, and there must be diehard Catholics who surround and scheme against you..."

Berengar sat in front of the man and took out a flask from his pocket and took a sip from it. The Sultan eyed the flask thoughtfully as Berengar did so; seeing the hopeful expression on the man's face, Berengar plugged the flask and tossed it over to him before explaining its contents.

"It is a fortified wine; we make it in Southern Tyrol. It has become one of my favorite drinks."

The man quickly took off the flask's cap before smelling it; after doing so, he had a taste; when he did so, his eyes began to shine with excitement before he took another swig. After drinking his fill, he handed the flask back to Berengar, which was half empty, and Berengar merely chuckled in response.

"You like it, huh?"

To this, the Sultan nodded his head before sighing heavily.

"It is a damn shame I can't drink openly; the more faithful of my followers would become disgruntled if they saw me doing such a thing..."

In response to this, Berengar took another swig before addressing the Sultan's previous concerns.

"I can't say I had issues with fanatical Catholics in my ranks. I did a thorough purge of such people during my rise to power. They were removed from their positions of power and replaced with like-minded people.

If what you say is true, the Fanatics in your Court are already plotting your death. I would be careful if I were you; anyone who remotely disfavors your secular nature could be a threat. Tell me, who in your Court would you label as a fanatic?"

Hasan thought about it for a few moments before he came to a sudden realization. Among all of the members of his Court, few looked fondly upon his secular rule; most of them were religious fundamentalists. As such, he quickly began to write down a list of potential suspects and their occupations.

Among the members listed were his brother, most of his advisors, his cupbearer, his cooks, and even two of his wives. He began to become filled with paranoia as he thought about these people as potential assassins.

Eventually, Hasan looked up at Berengar with a look of panic in his eyes, which slowly began to turn into a look of terror.

"What do I do? Any one of these people who are close to me could be a potential assassin!?!"

Berengar's lips began to curve into a wicked smile as he began to fill the Young Sultan with ideas of tyranny. As such, he took a sip from the flask once more before speaking the thoughts on his mind.

"Anyone, no matter what their relation to you, who is a potential threat should be removed from any position where they could endanger your life. Your cupbearer, for example, I see you have listed him as a potential threat. What if tonight is the night he slips poison into your chalice?"

Several of your cooks are listed as well; they could easily poison your food without you realizing it. Your Marshal? He can rally religious fundamentalists in your army to attack you personally. The captain of your house guard? He can turn them against you at any time.

What you need to do is remove these people immediately while surrounding yourself with allies. I do not mean to suggest surrounding yourself with sycophants who tell you what you want to hear; they are equally dangerous. You need people to support you, people who share your vision.

There must be some people in your Court who believe in your cause. I find it hard to believe that your father could rule for so long as a secular ruler without being assassinated if everyone in this Kingdom is a religious fundamentalist like you have surrounded yourself with.

You should make a list of your loyal followers, men who would kill and die for you, and have them remove every person on this list tonight at dinner. If necessary, do not be afraid to shed blood. Do not partake of the food or drink until you have secured your position. That is my suggestion."

Hasan took Berengar's words to heart but did not immediately proceed to implement them into action; instead, he looked at Berengar with a gaze of confusion before asking the question on his mind.

"Why are you willing to help me to such a degree, we barely know each other, and we come from two different worlds."

Berengar's expression sank to one of pure coldness as he addressed the young Sultan over his concerns.

"I have seen men of every denomination kill and die in the name of their religion. These men should never be afforded a position of power; it only brings death and destruction to every poor soul caught in their wake.

Though I have not known you for long, I can tell you are a man capable of bringing your people into a new golden age, one where a man isn't persecuted by the faithful because he views the world through a different lens than religion.

The path to power is filled with the corpses of your enemies. If you do not have the stomach to do what is necessary, then one day, the enemies surrounding you will succeed in claiming your life. You asked why I was helping you? You could say it is because I would rather not see the potential of a great man snuffed out by religious fanatics."

With this said, Berengar raised from his seat and approached the door; it was only after he had grasped upon the knob and began to open it that he revealed the last part of his train of thought.

"For the record, I killed my brother when he made an attempt on my life; if only I had done it sooner, I might have saved myself from the loss of my right eye. Learn from my mistake, and spare yourself some suffering..."

After leaving behind his message, Berengar left the Sultan's study and allowed the young man to dwell upon their discussion. Whether or not Hasan would be able to survive the night depended entirely upon how he proceeded with the information Berengar provided him.

### *Chapter 276: Purging the Opposition*

The time had finally come; once more, Hasan had thrown a giant feast to celebrate the arrival of his guests from the East. Those guests, of course, were Berengar and his host. At the same time, Hasan sat at the head of the table with his first wife and his family gathering beside him. Yusuf sat at the other end of the table with his allies nearby.

Berengar and his host were caught between two factions vying for power in the middle of the table. He did not know whether or not Hasan had taken their conversation seriously, but either way, he would be in for a good show tonight.

Berengar had decided to take a gamble and allow the young Sultan to grow as a ruler. Thus aside from having his guard nearby to protect the lives of Adela and himself, Berengar planned to sit back and watch the show.

He was not nervous in the slightest. However, Adela was having a difficult time sitting still. She was filled with anxiety and feared the potential of the Sultan being poisoned, and she and Berengar taking the blame.

Seeing his fiancée getting fidgety, Berengar grabbed ahold of her hand and whispered to her with a voice filled with confidence.

"Relax... Everything is going to be fine."

Upon feeling the warmth of Berengar's hand, Adela began to calm down; she closed her eyes and took a deep breath while gripping Berengar's hand tightly. As time passed, the food was eventually brought to the table, where Berengar and Adela waited for the Muslims to say their prayers.



After that was over, Berengar eyed Hasan with hidden intent; while doing so, the cupbearer was beginning to pour Hasan's wine. Though Berengar had not outright said that the chalice would be poisoned, he heavily implied it. Thus, he hoped that the young Sultan would not be foolish enough to take a drink from it.

After catching Berengar's gaze, Hasan nodded in return which signaled to Berengar that everything was going to be okay. Seeing this, Berengar began to relax his grip on Adela's hand slightly. Instead, he began to drink from the fruit juice which was poured for their consumption.

He knew his glass would not be poisoned; after all, he was the scapegoat the conspirators intended to implicate in their crime. Thus he took a heavy swig before placing the chalice down. After doing so, Hasan tapped his goblet with a spoon gaining everyone's attention before giving a speech.

"I would like to make a toast to our guests from Austria. I see great things happening between our two realms shortly. They have journeyed a long way to help us in our time of need, and as such, I would like to personally thank Duke Berengar for the assistance he has provided me during his stay."

When these words were spoken, Yusuf and his allies looked at each other with troubled gazes; they did not know precisely what Hasan was referring to. However, it did not matter; in the end, Hasan would still be poisoned, and Berengar would take the blame, or so they thought. After saying his piece, Hasan lifted his glass in the air and said the final words of his toast.

"To a new golden age!"

Berengar quickly raised his glass and replied before drinking its contents. As for Hasan, he did not take a drink from the glass and instead placed it on the table, still filled to the brim. In doing so, Yusuf and his allies became alarmed; Hasan was supposed to drink the fruit juice laced with arsenic, yet he had not done so. As such, Yusuf began to put on the facade of a concerned brother as he asked Hasan the question on his mind.

"Dearest brother, is your stomach upset? Why do you not drink after your toast?"

To this, Hasan merely sneered as he pushed the glass across the table, sliding it over to Yusuf without spilling a drop. After doing so, he gazed at Yusuf with an intimidating glare.

"Brother, prove your loyalty to me and drink from this chalice. After all, if you truly supported me, you would be happy to make sure that I am not about to be poisoned, would you not?"

The moment Hasan said this, Yusuf's eyes opened wide in shock, as did his allies. Yusuf began to protest as he tried not to drink from the chalice that he knew was poisoned.

"I would not dare drink from the Sultan's prized chalice. It would be disrespectful."

In response to this, Hasan smiled cruelly and spoke his mind.

"I am afraid I am going to have to insist."

Immediately after saying this, the young Sultan snapped his fingers; in doing so, the house Guard who were present immediately restrained Yusuf and his allies at the table, as well as the cupbearer who poisoned the drink.

While Yusuf struggled desperately from the grasp of the house guards who held him in place, one of the men loyal to Hasan had a wicked smile on his face as he picked up the poisoned chalice and forced its contents down Yusuf's throat.

Within seconds Yusuf began to foam at the mouth as he broke out into seizures, eventually passing away on the spot. Upon seeing this, the women present started to shriek in horror, including Adela, who was sitting next to Berengar. Berengar, of course, was enjoying the sight as if it were the most entertaining show he had ever watched.

After Yusuf's body collapsed onto the floor, Hasan gave a new decree to the guards present who were loyal to him.

"My brother tried to poison me! The men who sit next to him conspired against my life so that they could usurp my position! Kill them all!"

With this said, the house guards unleashed their blades as they began to slaughter the religious fanatics who comprised Hasan's royal court. Immediately a spear was thrust through the back of the marshal where it protruded through his chest. Blood spilled onto the table as the spymaster gazed in horror at the sight, however before he could react his jugular, and carotid arteries were cut open by another man loyal to the Sultan.

As this was going on, Berengar's guards surrounded him and Adela forming a wall of steel around their master and his fiancée to protect them from the chaos. They wielded their muskets with bayonets affixed in all directions, prepared to kill anyone who decided to harm them.

As for Hasan, he sat down at the table and began to dig into the food; seeing the banquet host taking the first bite, Berengar followed suit. In the middle of the bloodshed, two rulers partook of the meat on the table as if the gruesome sight did not cause the slightest bit of discomfort.

Before long, the guards had cleared the dining hall and had begun to spread through every corner of the castle, killing everyone on the list of names that Hasan had written as a potential assassin within his court. Sounds of steel clashing with steel resounded as the royal guard began to fight among themselves.

Those loyal to Hasan had been alerted of this event beforehand and were adequately armed and prepared for the slaughter. Yusuf and his allies had no way of knowing that Hasan had the guards loyal to them taken off duty for the night and replaced with those loyal to himself. After all, chainmail veils covered all of their faces.

After slaughtering the opposition at the dinner table, the loyal guards proceeded to the rest quarters of the disloyal guards and began to kill them in their sleep. Some had woken up due to the sounds of chaos and prepared themselves, but it was not enough to spare their lives.

While Berengar dined upon the roasted lamb, he commented on the flavor as if the bloodbath transpiring around them was non-existent.

"I will tell you one thing, lamb is the king of all meats, and your chefs know how to prepare it wonderfully!"

Hasan sighed upon hearing this before responding with a dejected expression.

"It is a pity most of my kitchen staff are going to be purged tonight..."

Berengar merely nodded his head upon hearing this and responding in an equally depressing voice.

"It is a pity indeed..."

Adela was in the middle of her seat, freaking out; she had never seen such violence and brutality. It was shocking for her; as she began to panic, Berengar grabbed ahold of her hand and tried to calm her down.

"Relax, sweetheart; everything will be fine!"

Adela unknowingly began to scream at Berengar as she raised from her seat.

"Fine? How can you call this fine!?! How are you so calm in a situation like this?" How can you still eat despite all this bloodshed! I think I am going to be sick..."

After saying this, Adela leaned over and hurled up the contents of her stomach; the sights and smells were too much for her fragile mind to handle. Berengar deeply regretted bringing her along; such a sight was something he never wanted her to witness.

Berengar sat Adela down next to him and began to rub her shoulders as he comforted her. Her gaze was affixed on the floor below, too frightened to look up at the savage display that surrounded her.

"If I had known things would end up like this, I would have never brought you here, Adela; I am truly sorry. However, I am a man who has fought on the front lines of war; this is trivial to compared to what I have witnessed."

While he was comforting Adela, one of Hasan's wives pulled out a dagger from her dress and charged at the young Sultan. However, before she could

reach him with her blade, one of Berengar's guards lowered his musket and fired a golf ball-sized hole through her chest, killing her on the spot.

A few of the other guards immediately lowered their rifled muskets as well, presenting a threat to the Sultan's other wives. Upon seeing this, Hasan was shocked he knew some of his wives were among the opposition, but he never thought they would dare kill him. As such, he wiped the sweat from his brow before addressing Berengar.

"Thanks... If not for your warning, or your men, I would have died tonight."

Berengar shook his head; he was still comforting Adela when he spoke to Hasan and thus was relatively calm about the whole thing.

"Not a problem... So I have to ask what happens now?"

As the screams of the slaughter continued in the background, Hasan began to speak of his plans for the future.

"In the upcoming days, I will purge the opposition from my army when only men loyal to me remain among its ranks; we can discuss the military aid you offered. I owe you my life, and a military alliance between our two kingdoms is the least I can do to repay you."

While listening to Hasan's plans, Berengar poured some of his fortified wine into his chalice; after Hasan and was finished speaking, he lifted the goblet in the air and spoke the words.

"A salaam alaikum."

In response to this, Hasan raised his new chalice as well before responding with the phrase

"Wa-Alaikum-Salaam"

the purges of the Kingdom of Granda would go on for a few more days. Thousands of conspirators from every facet of society and those loyal to them would be slaughtered by Hasan as he solidified his power as the Sultan of

Granada. After all, not all of the religious fundamentalists who wanted Hasan removed were stationed in Granada.

By the end of this event, Sultan Hasan Al-Fadl would reign supreme in the Emirate of Granada, and in doing so, provided Berengar with a valuable ally in Iberia. With Berengar's interference, the era of Secular Rule in Granada had truly begun.

*Chapter 277: You are Right, it is Not Meant to Be*

A week had passed since the fateful night where Berengar convinced Hasan to purge his Kingdom of the faction of religious fanatics who intended to overthrow his legitimate and secular government in favor of a theocratic Caliphate.

During this time, Berengar comforted Adela over the overwhelming stress and anxiety she felt during the purge. As a show of thanks to Berengar's support, Hasan had given Berengar a beachside Villa off the coast of Gibraltar. This beachside house was delivered in perpetuity to the von Kufstein Dynasty as a show of friendship.

While Hasan was busy purging the remaining opposition forces within his Kingdom, Berengar watched Adela play on the beach while sipping on a glass filled with fortified wine. For the first time since Berengar had transmigrated to this world, he was finally able to see a pretty girl in a bikini. That's right, knowing that he would be traveling to Iberia, Berengar purposely had a bikini made for Adela.

Because Berengar had yet to develop the process for creating nylon and other synthetic materials, Berengar could only resort to using natural fibers like Hemp. Hemp was breathable and dried quickly; as such, it was a good substitute for nylon when making swimwear. In fact, he was wearing modern-style swim trunks fashioned from the material.

The fresh air of the Mediterranean combined with the fun of the beach had begun to lift Adela's spirit after the brutal slaughter she had witnessed. Considering that a large chunk of the beach was reserved for Berengar and his Dynasty's private use, there was not another person visible for several hundred meters.

Adela's bikini was sapphire in color like her eyes, and she was pretty embarrassed while wearing such little clothing. However, Berengar had assured her it was only natural to wear light clothing on a beach, and considering she did not know any better; she decided to trust him. Which speaking from a modern perspective, this was the truth.

Besides, even if she could not admit it, it was exciting to be alone with Berengar and catch his fancy without any other girls interfering for once. As such, she began to construct a sandcastle on the beach while Berengar watched her with joy.

It was not until some time later that Berengar's fun was interrupted by a messenger on Horseback. He had ridden from Granada to give Berengar a letter. As Berengar opened the letter and read its contents, his smile began to fade, and he nodded at the rider before sending him back to his master. Berengar quickly approached Adela informing her of the business at hand.

"Looks like our little vacation is over. Now is the time to return to Granda and discuss the terms of our newfound alliance with the Sultan."

Upon Hearing this, Adela's eye began to show panic, and Berengar understood why, after witnessing such a horrific scene, Adela had no desire to go back to Granada; the very thought of it could induce panic attacks. As such, he hugged the girl who was beginning to breathe heavily and stroked her golden hair.

"It is fine, you can stay here and enjoy the beach, but I have to go. I will make sure some of my guards stay behind to protect you."

Despite Berengar's kindness, Adela shook her head and steeled her resolve. She responded to Berengar with a look of great determination in her eyes.

"I will not be your burden! You asked me to come with you to ensure that your diplomatic efforts succeed. Even though I can't do much, I can still make sure you remain calm if things get heated. So despite my misgivings, I will accompany you; after all, I am your wife!"

Berengar's jaw nearly fell agape as he heard this; all he could think of in his mind was one simple phrase.

"This girl is too cute!"

With that, he picked Adela up and carried her princess style back to the manor, where they began to separate so that they could change into the appropriate attire. After doing so, they stepped out of the Castle and entered the carriage prepared for them by the Sultan.

After traveling for a few days, they finally arrived in Granada, where Adela had difficulty stepping out of the carriage and into the Castle. Berengar grasped onto her shaking hand as he led her into the Castle; thankfully, any sign of the massacre that had previously taken place here was thoroughly cleaned up, as if it had never happened, allowing Adela to breathe easily.

After traversing through the Castle into the Sultan's great hall Berengar and Adela stood before the Sultan of Granada, who stood up from his seat and approached Berengar while smiling. Hasan grabbed ahold of Berengar and hugged him as if he were a long-lost brother; after a few seconds, he let go of his grasp and began to speak to Berengar about what had happened over the last week.

"My friend! It is great to see you; I can assure you that the fanatics who oppose my rule have been eliminated, there is no threat to my power left within my Emirate, and it is all thanks to your advice. If I did not have you to guide me, I would have been killed on that dreadful night. I hope the villa was to your liking?"

In response to this, Berengar smiled and clasped the man's shoulder as he nodded his head with a smile on his face.

"It was wonderful; you have a beautiful country, I and I look forward to spending much of my future at the Villa you have provided my family and me!"

Hasan smiled and nodded as he spoke to Berengar.

"Excellent! Excellent! I knew you would enjoy it; again, I am so sorry you had to witness that barbaric display. I assure you, I am taking every precaution to appoint loyal and competent subjects as you have advised. Now we can discuss matters of State without the interference of those fanatics!"



Berengar walked by Hasan's side, and Adela followed behind the two men as they chatted. Berengar fully announced his plans for the future of their two States.

"I will be frank with you, Hasan; within a year, I intend to become fully independent of the Holy Roman Empire, establishing the Kingdom of Austria. The Emperor plots against me, and I can no longer remain loyal to a man who would try to sabotage my people's wealth and happiness over religious differences.

More than anything, I need an ally, someone dependable, someone like-minded, and someone with the potential to grow alongside me. I suggest comprehensive trade agreements between our two kingdoms to expand our wealth further, but more importantly, a powerful military alliance between our two States.

I can supply you with arms, armor, and munitions at a discounted price and even provide you with military advisors for five years so that your troops can become fully equipped with the knowledge and resources to defeat your enemies.

In return, all that I ask is that if I ever come into a situation where I am incapable of defending my borders by myself, that you aid me. In return for this, I promise to do the same for you, my friend."

When Hasan heard this, he was pretty shocked. Berengar was making quite a large request of the Sultan. However, the Sultan also knew that Berengar's armies were among the best in Europe. As such, he was interested in the offer and thus voiced his concerns on the matter.

"When you say you will provide me with arms, armor, and munitions, I assume you are not referring to the ones that your army utilizes."

Berengar began to chuckle as he heard this and responded honestly.

"You would be correct; I won't lie to you; I intend to maintain the stranglehold I have over advanced military technology. However, what I can do is provide you with the arms, armor, munitions, and tactics I have sold to the Byzantines."

Hasan's interest grew further when he heard this. What Berengar had offered him was a far better deal than what Berengar gave the Hussites. While Berengar officially had no ties to the Hussites, Hasan was not foolish enough to believe Berengar was innocent of what he proclaimed himself regarding the war in Bohemia.

The fact that Berengar was willing to provide the same level of assistance to Hasan that he offered to the Byzantines proved that the young Duke was sincere about the alliance with Granada. After all, the Byzantines had begun to make significant advances into Egypt and Lybia throughout the last year, mainly due to Berengar's equipment.

After hearing this, Hasan sighed and voiced his concerns over the arrangement.

"Normally, an alliance like this is sealed with marriage..."

Before Berengar could allow Hasan to finish the statement, he interjected.

"Don't even think about it. I already have three women; if I add another one, I am almost certain at least one of my girls will kill me in my sleep!"

Hasan began to chuckle at this response and gazed over at Adela, who was pouting silently to Berengar's words. There was no denying it; the fury in her eyes showed that two other girls were already her limit as the main wife. Adela outright refused to allow Berengar to take in some Moorish whore as yet another bride to be.

Seeing the terrifying look on Adela's cute little face, Hasan clasped Berengar's shoulder and sighed.

"You have my sympathies, my friend; I too know what it is like to have one of your wives make an attempt on your life. Fine, forget what I said; since I owe you my life, this request of a comprehensive alliance between our two realms is a small thing to ask. We will draft a mutually beneficial treaty for our people, and I will be more than happy to sign it! It is just a shame..."

Berengar was smiling throughout Hasan's response, but when he heard that last part, it made him instinctively curious, and as such, Berengar asked the question on his mind.

"What is?"

Hasan chuckled as he heard this before replying.

"My little sister is quite beautiful and in need of a husband. Oh well, I guess it is not meant to be..."

Hearing this, Berengar nearly cursed under his breath, but he felt the murderous gaze of Adela watching over his every move and thus sighed instead.

"You are right; it is not meant to be..."

#### *Chapter 278: The King's Sorrows*

Aubry was back at the Palace in Paris; his father, King Gilles de Valois of France, was currently in the process of scolding the errant Prince. For the past year, Aubry had been fighting alongside one of his lovers, the Duke of Burgundy, against the English invasion.

Rumors began to spread of the Holy Maiden of France, and they had inspired a fighting spirit within the French people. As such, the French had started to make significant gains; that is until now. The Duke of Burgundy had made a shocking announcement on this day. He would be seceding from France and pledging his support to the English Crown.

Few knew the actual reason for him doing so, and it had begun to cause speculation within the French Royal Court as to why the Duke would suddenly turn sides despite the French beginning to gain the upper hand in the conflict.

The reason for this was quite simple, the Duke of Burgundy found out that Prince Aubry was cheating on him with a total of four other lovers, feeling betrayed and outraged that the young man he had pledged his love to was such a filthy slut, the Duke of Burgundy declared open rebellion against the French Crown.

Because of this, France had once more begun to enter into a state of defeat, as they were now being attacked on both sides by their enemies, splitting their armies in two to combat the new threat from within.

Gilles was one of the few men aware of the reasoning for the Duke of Burgundy's betrayal, and he only had one person he could blame. That being His errant son who liked to dress up as a woman and get rammed by other men. Seeing his son kneeling before him, who looked prettier than his daughter, caused Gilles to spit upon the youth in disgust.

"Your degeneracy truly knows no bounds, my son. I would have thought that you learned your lesson by now, but you can't behave yourself, can you?"

Aubry had a calm expression; he had been in this situation many times before, and as such, was well aware that his father's punishment would never be too severe. Thus he merely sat there stoically waiting for his father's critique of his behavior to end.

"Do you not have anything to say for yourself? Are you not sorry for the damage your actions have caused? The lives that have been lost? Do you have any idea what you have done to this Kingdom!?!"

With each question the King asked, his tone of voice grew more furious, and so too did it become louder. Still, Aubry did not speak a word while being scolded in such an outrageous manner. Sibilla, on the other hand, gazed at Aubry from the other side of the chamber. She was Aubry's elder sister and the only Princess of France.

Though nobody knew it, it was precisely her fault that Aubry turned into a crossdressing freak. She had always been envious of Aubry's natural beauty, even when they were children, and as such, she had spent a great deal of time dressing Aubry up in girl's clothes and putting makeup on him.

Eventually, such behavior influenced the boy into the young man he had become. Even she was amazed at the body count Aubry had behind him. Princess Sibilla was by no means pure, despite being unmarried, but she was far from as experienced as Aubry was.

Such a thing was another point of contention in her heart, as more than once, guys she wanted to get with passed her by so they could sleep with her crossdressing little brother. After all of this, Aubry was somehow labeled the Holy Maiden of France and caused such a huge fiasco.

She was both impressed and envious of Aubry's talents in attracting men. As such, she merely sat by and watched with glee as her younger brother was scolded for his lecherous actions that had led to the Duke of Burgundy acting in rebellion.

Eventually, the King sighed heavily before calming himself down. He rested his head within his hands before coming to a decision.

"I have no choice but to send you to the frontlines again, you will bring back the head of your former lover, or you will never be allowed to return to this Palace. Do I make myself understood?"

Aubry snickered as he heard this lenient sentence for his crimes and responded to his father like an obedient child.

"Yes, daddy..."

The King's skin instantly crawled when he heard this; every time his son referred to him in such a manner, it made him want to cut his own ears off. Aubry needed to be taught a proper lesson, but he simply did not have the heart to be so cruel.

Aubry raised from his position and left the Great Hall, leaving the King alone with his only daughter. Sibilla immediately began to chastise her father for being so lenient with Aubry.

"Tsk...tsk...tsk... The King of France is being lenient on his children once again. Do you ever wonder if that's the reason we all turned out so sinful?"

The moment she said this, the King's expression worsened as he heard his equally as disappointing daughter enter the fray. As such, he responded with a weary face.

"Sibilla, my only daughter, don't you have something better to do? For example, you could be skinning a puppy or pushing a baker's son into the oven at this very moment. Anything other than giving this old man even greater heartache."

Sibilla immediately began to protest as she heard this

"Ughh, You push the baker's son into an oven one time, and you never live it down! No father, I do not have anything better to do at the moment besides watch you slap Aubry on the wrist for causing the Duke of Burgundy to rebel against you!"

The King immediately began to fire back at Sibilla's response as he began to chastise her as well.

"Don't even get started with me, young lady! You have caused your fair share of internal rebellion! Remember the time you caused the Duchy of Aquitaine to side with the English because you nailed the Duke's scrotum to his bedframe!"

As Sibilla heard this, she began to giggle wickedly; she had completely forgotten about the incident and began to mock the events.

"Oh yeah! I forgot about that. Of course, it was his fault, he told me I couldn't make him cry in bed, and I took that as a challenge!"

The King of France began to sigh once more as he heard his daughter's reasoning for her actions. Sometimes he swore that God was punishing him by giving him, such wicked children. Aubry was a lustful crossdresser, and Sibella was a violent psychopath. His other two children were not much better, one was a lazy glutton, and the other was a greedy coward.

He could swear that if he ended up having seven children, they would each be the personification of at least one of the seven deadly sins. He had no idea how his children turned out so horrible; maybe Sibilla was right, perhaps he was a terrible father who allowed them to get away with too much mischief.

As he thought about such things, Sibilla began to laugh once more before speaking the thoughts on her mind.

"Do you actually trust Aubry to lead an army against the Duke of Burgundy? I mean, he will probably just end up sleeping with all of his Knights. To think that the legendary Holy Maiden of France is nothing more than a perverted prince! It is hilarious, isn't it?"

At this point, the King had suffered enough of his daughter's torment and got up from his seat before slapping her across the face.

"Get out of my sight!"

In response to this, Sibilla snarled at the King as if she were some wild beast before turning away and walking towards her room, leaving the King of France alone on his throne, thinking about how he had managed to screw up so much as a father, and as a King.

Aside from his wayward children, there were several other things that the King had been lamenting as of late. The war against England would not be ending any time soon, and none of his children were up to the task of leading the armies against the invaders. His most excellent General had just turned against him because of his son's scandalous actions, and now he was left with a war on Three fronts.

The English invaded from the North and the Southwest, and now he had to fight the Burgundians in the Southeast. Things did not look like they could get much worse. He knew that when the English King heard about this latest betrayal, he would be laughing up a storm at the misery and humiliation that the French Royal Dynasty had suffered on this day.

As such, the French King had turned to his most recent pastime, the method that most depressed people used to get through the day. Thus the French King poured himself a chalice filled with wine and began to drink his sorrows away.

#### *Chapter 279: Alliance of Gibraltar*

At the moment, Berengar and Hasan were sitting across from each other in the middle of the Villa that had been given to Berengar. The two men had a scribe draft up a copy of the alliance agreement that was to take effect between the two Realms.

Berengar and Hasan sat for several hours and debated the clauses and stipulations added to the treaty. By the time the sun began to set, the document was drafted in its final state and was fully agreed on between the two parties. After several re-readings to ensure that everything was one hundred percent correct, the two men signed it into effect.

This was more than a mutual defensive pact; what the two rulers signed would later become known as the Alliance of Gibraltar. This treaty stipulated several essential factors, one of them guaranteeing independence between the two realms.

The other portions of the treaty included a mutual defense pact, and a comprehensive trade agreement, to ensure the prosperity of both nations. After it was signed into law, Berengar had done the unthinkable. A Christian Duke had established a long-term alliance with a Muslim Emirate.

As part of the trade agreement, Berengar would supply the Emirate of Granada with arms, armor, and munitions at a discounted price of 25%. It was a better deal than he was giving the Byzantines, and though Hasan was not aware of this, he did suspect it.

Berengar's reasoning for this was simple, the Byzantine Empire was mighty enough without his weapons and could be a bulwark against his enemies. In comparison, Granada was pretty weak, and as such, Berengar had to bolster their strength as quickly as possible if they were going to prove to be a menace to their Catholic neighbors when the time for it was needed.

After signing the defensive pact, Berengar pulled out a bottle of fortified wine and opened it on the spot, pouring it into a pair of crystal glasses. Though Hasan had previously seen such prominent glassware in the market, as Berengar had already begun trading in Granada, he did not own a set himself.

After swirling the red liquid in his cup for a few moments, Berengar sniffed the aroma that the alcoholic beverage provided before taking a sip from it. He swirled it around his tongue for a few moments before swallowing it and exhaling as he did so.

"Wine does not get better than this..."



Hasan began to drink from his glass similarly; he seemed to enjoy the product. As he swallowed from the cup's contents, he exhaled before exclaiming the thoughts in his mind.

"I trust that this wine will be included in our trade agreement."

Upon hearing this, Berengar broke out into laughter and made a jest towards his new friend.

"Of course! Though I doubt it will sell well in Granada. After all, it is forbidden in your holy book to drink alcohol."

Hasan also began to chuckle as he heard Berengar's comment. However, he knew that there were still plenty of men who drank wine, and as such, he decided to inform Berengar of this.

"That is true, and most people adhere to such strict principles. However, there are still quite a few among us who love the taste of wine. I assure you, those noblemen who care for such things will pay a premium to get their hands on this."

After hearing this, Berengar nodded before drinking from his glass once more; after he finished sipping on the fortified wine, he agreed to sell the product in Granada.

"Well, if that is the case, I will have no problem selling you this wine. Of course, I have plenty of other types of alcohol if you are interested, some are even stronger than this...:

After Hasan heard this, his eyes nearly jumped out of his sockets; this was already stronger than any drink he had ever tasted, at least in terms of alcohol content. He had trouble believing Berengar's words.

However, the next moment Berengar pulled out a small bottle filled with an amber substance; it was some of the whiskey he had been distilling in Kufstein for some time now. After pouring the beverage into a small shot glass, he downed it in one go. Berengar proceeded to directly pour another one for Hasan with a cruel smile on his face.

However, Hasan did not know what Berengar was planning and instead was looking at Berengar as if he were an idiot. When he saw the minuscule amount of liquid Berengar had provided him, he could not help but be offended.

"My friend, is this a joke, or are you just being stingy?"

As Berengar heard this, he had a wicked grin on his face as he challenged Hasan to drink it whole.

"If you can drink everything in that small glass in one go without choking, I will give you five whole bottles for free; how about that?"

Seeing Berengar just downed the contents of the small glass as if it were nothing, Hasan felt pretty confident, and as such, he smiled at Berengar before grabbing ahold of the shot glass and dumping the contents down his throat.

The moment he did, he instantly regretted it as he felt all of the cells in his mouth immediately dehydrate. As Hasan choked on the liquid for several moments, Berengar laughed and clapped in the background.

While the two men were having a foolish bet, Adela was down on the beach below, playing with the crabs on the beach. Berengar occasionally watched her do so, and he was not the only one. Hasan was surprised that she was wearing so little clothing.

After all, she was dressed in the hemp bikini Berengar had made for her, and as such, the young Sultan was attracted to her. Noticing his Hasan's gaze, Berengar snapped him out of it with a sharp response.

"Don't even think about it..."

Hearing the chilling tone in Berengar's voice, the slightly intoxicated Sultan realized he had done wrong and apologized.

"I am sorry, it must be the alcohol; that is some wildly strong shit! Still, I have to ask, why do you let your woman dress in so little clothing?"

Berengar merely laughed at this comment as he responded to Hasan's inquiry.

"Because I enjoy the sight. Also, she's on the beach. What else is she supposed to wear? There are few better sights in this world than a pretty girl in a bikini!"

Hasan had no idea what a bikini was, but he could guess by the context of Berengar's statement that it was the item of clothing that Adela was wearing. As such, he thought of a brilliant idea.

"How much for these bikinis? I want some for my wives!"

Berengar chuckled in response to this; few men could resist the allure of a pretty girl in a bikini; as such, Berengar decided to do Hasan a favor.

"Send me your wives' measurements, and I will be happy to get a few of them made for your women. I will send them with the next shipment to Granda for no extra charge."

Hasan immediately began to smile as he decided to drink more whiskey. He could already imagine what his beautiful wives would look like in such little attire.

After drinking for a while longer, Berengar and Adela began to see Hasan off. The man was reasonably intoxicated at this point and looked at Berengar with fondness.

"Until we meet again, my friend, it is just a shame you have to return to your home so soon!"

Berengar nodded and sighed.

"I enjoyed the time we spent together; I look forward to your future visit to my homeland. When you arrive, I can show off all of our cuisines; I am sure you will enjoy it."

With that said, Hasan got into his carriage and began his journey back to his home in Granada. As for Berengar and Adela, they would be sailing back to Kufstein in the following morning. As such, Berengar wanted to spend a little bit more time with his fiancée.

Berengar grabbed ahold of Adela's dainty hand and led her down to the beach. Where the couple walked along the soft sand barefoot while gazing up at the moon and the stars above, Berengar had a lot to say on his mind to the girl before they returned home, and would not see each other for some time, thus Berengar immediately stopped turned around, and looked Adela in the eyes while conveying his thoughts.

"I am sorry..."

Adela was slightly confused when she heard this, and as such, she asked for clarification.

"For what?"

Berengar sighed heavily before revealing the regrets he had contained deep within his heart since the first time he cheated on his little fiancée.

"For starters, I am sorry I am such a piece of shit. We were engaged and set to be a happy couple, and like every relationship I have ever had with another person, I had to fuck it up. I couldn't keep my urges to myself, and I slept with Linde, then I lied to you repeatedly about it.

When my lies were finally exposed, you stuck beside me, and I ended up repaying your kindness by taking in another girl before I ever had the chance to be with you. I know it doesn't change anything; I have to take responsibility for my actions after all. I just wanted you to know that I am sorry for treating you so poorly and forcing you to go along with my selfish desires."

Adela looked at Berengar with a complicated gaze; she took this statement as Berengar's way of admitting he had already slept with Honoria, which she did not know about until now. As such, she looked away from Berengar before asking the question on her mind.

"Berengar, be honest with me; why did you take me on this trip? You seemed to have handled everything on your own the entire time..."

Berengar sighed before gazing off into the moonlight; after doing so for a few moments, he smiled bitterly before revealing his thought process on the matter.

"I wanted to spend some quality time with you. Since you departed from Kufstein, I have not spent as much time with you as I would have liked. I honestly had no idea we would be caught in a conspiracy and have to witness such horrific scenes. I am sorry for that as well; if I had known such a thing would have happened, I never would have brought you here."

Adela sighed heavily before lying down on the beach and staring up at the stars. Berengar took the hint and lay down next to her, where Adela grabbed ahold of his hand and said with a bitter smile on her face.

"One more year... Just one more year, and we can finally get married..."

Berengar could see the tiny tear forming in the girl's sapphire eyes as she said this, and as such, he forced a smile upon his face as he spoke the truth.

"I look forward to it!"

After saying that, the couple had a long conversation on the beach; What exactly was said on that fateful night has been lost to history. However, one thing was certain the relationship between Adela and Bernegar improved afterward.

#### *Chapter 280: God's Gift to the World*

Weeks had passed since Berengar returned to Kufstein, and during this time, he had been focused on expanding his naval capacity. Compared to the Venetian Arsenal, he still lacked output, even though he had three shipyards equal in scale, if not more significant.

The reason for this was simple, a lack of experience on the part of the workers who created the ships from the prefabricated components. The Venetians had centuries of experience building vessels, and as such, they could crank out a single ship every day.

Whether or not they could manufacture the cannons necessary to equip these vessels was another story. After all, they were using relatively small-bore primitive bronze cannons at this point. Bronze is a much rarer material than Iron, and of course, more expensive. The Venetian warships also lacked broadside cannons, with their armaments exclusively being located at the fore and aft positions.

Compared to the Venetian Arsenal, Berengar's shipyards in Trieste and Pola, dedicated to Naval Armament, were only capable of producing one ship every four days. However, these ships were fifth-rate frigates with a total of forty-four 24 lb cannons on board. As such, his Navy began to expand rapidly in terms of the number of vessels available, and thus Berengar had to boost recruitment efforts towards his Navy.

As for his Merchant fleet, it was also growing rapidly, with one clipper being built every three days. While Naval power was necessary to secure his dominion over the region, a properly established merchant fleet was necessary to establish trade across the Mediterranean.

At the moment, Berengar's Grand Army was 50,000 strong and was the most well-equipped and trained army in all of Europe. However, his Navy severely lacked comparison, with only 10,000 recruits over the past year, which was barely enough to field 45 vessels.

At the moment, Berengar was in the middle of implementing an essential resource to his Naval Vessels. He was honestly surprised that he had not thought of such a thing before. His vessels were currently using inferior hemp rope, and he was planning to improve it with superior manila rope when he reached the Philippines, much like how the Spanish had done in his previous life.

However, Berengar came to a sudden realization that he had a far more valuable resource and a vast stockpile of it that could be utilized in the manufacture of rope for sailing vessels. This material was, of course, high carbon steel.

Beginning in the 1830s of Berengar's previous life, steel wire rope had started to replace the traditional manila rope used by most sailing vessels. The

reason for this was that steel wire rope was superior in strength, durability, and flexibility compared to textile rope.

Due to the advancements in steel-making technology and the massive supply the Europeans were able to produce during this time; they used such materials to improve the rigging of their sailing vessels.

As such, Berengar had begun to place an order to construct high carbon galvanized steel wire where it would be converted into ropes for sailing and replace the existing hemp ropes that were used on what few vessels Berengar had available.

It was best to make these innovations as early as possible. As such, Berengar had begun to implement them for all new vessels in the future; he also planned to convert the ropes on the existing ships as quickly as he could manage.

After drafting the designs and sending them to his industrial district within Trieste via a courier, Berengar sat back and relaxed in his dining hall. Just when he was about to sip some tea, he received some shocking news from one of his servants who had appeared before him.

"Your grace, Sir Andronikos of the Byzantine Empire is here to speak with you..."

Upon hearing this, Berengar sighed before getting up from his seat and approaching the great hall, leaving behind his tea in the process. When Berengar arrived, the man from the east had a broad smile on his face as he greeted the young Duke of Austria.

"Your grace, it is good to see that you are well!"

Berengar put on a smile as he greeted the man who had long since become his primary means of trade with the East since Arethas had become engaged in his campaign for North Africa.

"And you as well, my friend, tell me how is the war effort going in Egypt and Lybia?"

Andronikos sighed as he heard this question and revealed the results of the ongoing campaign.

"For the most part, it is going well; we have seized a quarter of Egypt and Libya and are currently expanding forward. However, the Knights Hospitaller, who has supported us for some time, has begun to withdraw.

Those fanatics realized that we were being supplied by Austria and immediately became offended. Stating it was either you or them, we chose your support. Seeing as your weapons are superior to the men they provide for the war effort."

Berengar chuckled at this comment before shifting the conversation to the issue at hand.

"Tell me, Andronikos, why are you here in Kufstein?"

The Byzantine man smiled before pulling out a ceramic jar; he revealed the contents within after opening it. Berengar was shocked when he saw what was inside the container. Small dark brown beans that Berengar instantly recognized.

The young Duke's eyes grew wide with excitement when he saw what was in front of him; as such, he grabbed ahold of one of the beans and sniffed it to make sure he was not dreaming. What Andronikos had brought him was something he had desired since he arrived in this world; it was none other than coffee!

As such, Berengar immediately inquired about where Andronikos had gotten such a thing.

"Tell me, my friend, where did you get this?"

Andronikos was surprised that Berengar asked where he obtained the coffee beans, not what they were; nevertheless, he began to inform Berengar of his recent discovery.



"Not long ago, I was invited to Ethiopia by one of the local noblemen; when I arrived, I was served this bitter tea, except it wasn't tea, and it provided substantial benefits such as an increase in energy and focus. The Ethiopians explained to me that this is God's gift to the world, and they call it coffee!

Naturally, I bought an ample supply of it, and the first thing I thought of when I returned home was the potential that such a product has. While we in the Empire have access to the trade routes in the Mediterranean, it would be difficult for us to sell the substance further into Europe.

As such, I thought of a trading partner with a significant deal of reach further inland, and immediately your name came to mind.? Allow me to brew a drink for you to see for yourself how excellent this product is. If you enjoy it and think it has as much potential as I do, we can discuss importing it into Kufstein, where you can resell it to the rest of Europe!"

Berengar naturally accepted his offer and led the man to the kitchen, where he ground the beans into a fine powder before boiling water and adding it through the filter to create a cup of coffee. Berengar tasted the bitter black substance with a smile on his face while nodding his head.

"It is wonderful, but don't you think it would taste better with something added to it? Maybe some milk and sugar?"

Andronikos had not thought about this, and as such, was interested in the topic. Therefore Berengar made a mixture of the coffee with milk and sugar added to it before handing a cup to Andronikos. After the man sipped from the ceramic cup, his eyes widened, and a giant smile formed on his face.

"This tastes so much better than the coffee by itself! Your grace, you are a genius!"

After hearing this, Berengar merely smiled in silence and drank from his cup of coffee. Finally, he had acquired one of the many things he missed from his previous life in the twenty-first century.? After the two men had drunk their fair share of coffee, Berengar began to speak to Andronikos about his decision.

"I will buy as much of the material as you can give me, and I would be more than happy to sell it across Austria and the neighboring regions. Considering

your lack in trade routes to the North, the two of us combined can sell this fine substance across all of Europe and make a major profit off of it!"

After hearing this, Andronikos smiled; the remaining details about what the cost was for importing the coffee and what Berengar would resell it at was negotiated over a breakfast, where Berengar and Andronikos introduced coffee to Linde, Honoria, and Henrietta, all three of which fell in love with the drink.

With milk and sugar added to the mix, coffee would become a desirable commodity within Europe in due time; both Austria and the Byzantine Empire would make a fortune off of the monopoly they would establish over the substance. After all, few in Europe had contact with Ethiopia and were unaware of where the strange drink originated from.

Berengar was delighted to know that by supplying the Byzantines with arms in this timeline, they were capable of recapturing large swaths of Egypt and Lybia, where they immediately took advantage of the newly gained territory to send trade expeditions into Africa, in doing so bringing Coffee to Europe over a century earlier than it had been done in his previous life's history.