

Steel 37

Chapter 37: We Will See About That

After Lothar had departed from Kufstein, Berengar explained to his family the deal he had reached with the old Count. They were very pleased with the results, especially Sieghard, who was convinced that Berengar was fit to be his Regent after such a performance. A storm was brewing in the capital of the Kingdom of Germany, and Sieghard feared it would not be long before the war had ravaged the lands. Soon enough, he would be called off to battle once more, and when that happened, he would need a capable leader to rule in his stead. Initially, he was planning on placing one of his councilors as regent. However, these past few months, Berengar had transformed into a formidable young lord, one in which he knew would one day make a superior Baron to himself. It was such a pity that he could only allow his son to inherit this humble Barony. Berengar's potential as a ruler was so much greater than anyone he had ever met.

As such, Baron Sieghard von Kufstein had finalized the plans to declare his son the Regent of Kufstein; if for whatever reason he was forced to leave the dominion of his ancestors, it would be his son and heir who would have control while he was away. Tomorrow, he would fully declare to the family and his councilors that Berengar was to be Regent. For now, the Baron had to chastise his second son for making such a terrible mistake that, if not for

Berengar's intervention, would have cost the family dearly. Lately, Lambert had been failing Sieghard's high expectations; if you were to ask him half a year ago which was his favorite son, it would be Lambert. Yet now Berengar was the shining star of the family, and Lambert was an utter disappointment; the roles of his two sons had reversed completely.

While Sieghard had a long and difficult conversation with Lambert, Berengar was currently overseeing the drills of his militia, alongside his second in command, Eckhard. Currently, his troops were equipped in entirely new garb. Berengar had used his textile factories and the imported materials to construct the uniforms of his militia. He had gained quite the eye for fashion ever since he was transmigrated into this world and was surrounded by luxuries. As such, the attire of his peasant militia was that of the Landsknecht, which were elite mercenaries of the 16th-century battlefields from Berengar's previous life. Their clothing was honestly quite flamboyant, but it looked fantastic from Berengar's perspective. The Landschnekt uniforms were all dyed in the colors of his house, which were black, and white, and gold. The NCOs and Officers were currently garbed in blackened steel munitions grade half-plate armor, with matching burgonets and gorgets. Each piece had an intricate brass pattern engraved across the armor.

Berengar was also properly equipped in the attire, though his outfit was even more garish than the other soldiers. He wore a waffenrock which was essentially a skirt that went over his pantaloons, and instead of a burgonet, he was equipped with a blackened steel skull cap, with a feathered Landsknecht hat that was dyed in the colors of his uniform and house. Unlike his officers, the trim of his armor was done with gold, showing off the wealth and prestige he had recently acquired, as well as his authority as the commander. He also wore a chain maille mantel over his gorget, which was made of blackened steel rings, except for the bottom two rows which were made of brass. All of the men were equipped with the anachronistic-looking 1417 Land Pattern Muskets, and they had their socket bayonets attached. Roughly 800 Men had been split into six companies who were currently training in line tactics.

For some time now, Berengar had been attempting to get his father to approve the manufacture of armor for his troops; initially, his father was adamant that all armor production be given priority to his standing army. However, the workforce of the arms industry in Kufstein was now much larger than it was before, and the exact equipment Sieghard requested for his army was fully fielded. Thus Berengar had finally gotten the approval he needed to equip his militia with the armor they desperately required, but that was a very recent event. Aside from the NCOs and Officers, very few men were currently

equipped with proper armor. Still, it would not be long before his Army was the most well-equipped force in the world.

Truth be told, Sieghard was not exactly keen on adapting Berengar's military innovations, primarily because Berengar deliberately downplayed how revolutionary they were, but also because he was quite the traditionalist and believe the use of brigandine, mail, and gambeson for his standing army was a far superior quality than the munitions grade half plate, and outlandish clothing that Berengar's forces were currently equipped with. He would be absolutely incorrect, as the armor Berengar's troops were fielded with was more than enough to sufficiently protect them against any lethal threat on the current battlefields while still being lightweight and maneuverable enough to conduct warfare properly. In fact, due to the quality of the steel Berengar was currently producing, he could manufacture slightly thinner and lighter weight armor than was historically used in the renaissance while still being just as effective in protection.

As Berengar mustered his forces and walked them through everything from marching drills, firing drills, and anti-cavalry drills. Linde watched from afar with a passionate gaze in her eyes; she was either smart enough or infatuated enough to believe that Berengar's tactics were revolutionary. After all, she had directly heard from Berengar's mouth during pillow talk how effective his

weapons and tactics were at the Battle of Mining Town. She was too enamored by the spectacular sight of Berengar commanding his troops to notice that Adela had been walking by and noticed her impassioned ogling of Berengar.

Adela instantly felt something was amiss about Linde's glances and began to wonder if Linde had feelings for Berengar. After all, the girl treated her own fiance like crap, especially after the recent incident, and had always been giving weird looks to Berengar and herself throughout the past couple of months. Initially, she thought that Linde was on Lambert's side in whatever conflict the brothers were engaged in, but now she did not know what to think.

These were not the glances of a woman studying her enemy but that of a school girl intensely focused on her crush. As such, Adela decided to approach and question the girl who was slightly older but much more developed than herself while she was currently entranced.

"Magnificent, isn't he? So much better than his scoundrel of a little brother."

Linde was caught up in the scene in the field below and did not even register the fact that Adela had approached her; she merely heard the words and responded on instinct.

"He sure is!"

Only after Linde had said those words did she recognize that Adela asked the question and that the little girl was testing her. A look of horror spread across the beauty's face as she realized that she practically just admitted that she preferred Berengar over her own fiance to Berengar's fiancée. On the other hand, Adela was not pleased; she got the answer she was most afraid of. A frown spread across the cute little girl's face as she quickly became strict with the teenage temptress standing next to her.

"I do not care if you admire him from afar; I suppose most girls do but do not approach him. Berengar is my future husband, and I have no intention of letting a harlot like yourself steal him away from me."

However, the little girl's attempt to get Linde to withdraw backfired completely. The corners of Linde's lips curved into a devilish smile; she slowly approached Adela with a smug expression on her face and whispered in the girl's ear.

"We will see about that."

Afterward, Linde strutted away confidently as she left little Adela pouting in anger like a small child. Though Linde respected Berengar's wishes to not inform others of their relationship, she knew that someday Berengar would recognize their child as his own, and when that day came, if the heavens blessed her with a son, it would be her child and not Adela's who inherited the

Empire that Berengar would one day carve out of this land. As such, she was feeling pretty confident in the brief but heated exchange between herself and her lover's fiancée. Of course, the moment Berengar found out about this lover's quarrel, she would be punished severely, which also gave her a sense of excitement and anticipation. It had been a while since Berengar had been rough with her; maybe she could finally invoke his ire with this incident.

Adela, on the other hand, was in an extremely foul mood; Linde's response could only mean one thing, that seductress was going to try to steal her man. Adela would not let Berengar fall into the Vixen's trap. After all, though he was a benevolent man, he was still a man and could easily fall for a woman's wiles. Especially one as gorgeous as Linde. She vowed in her heart never to allow that to happen. Of course, if she were aware that Berengar had long since been involved in an intimate relationship with Linde, she would probably tear her own heart out. As the thunderous sounds of shots were fired into the straw targets by Berengar and his forces, war was declared in his own backyard without him even being aware. This was not a war that would exist between men and their armies, but two young beautiful woman and their claims on a particularly excellent young man.

It was only after the militia was done with its daily training that Berengar returned to the village. He was standing alongside his troops in the town

square. He had his family's cooks work all day to prepare a feast for his soldiers and himself. While the army was mustering in the fields, the chefs were preparing a banquet for the hard-working troops. When Berengar told his chefs that he wanted to prepare a surprise party for his troops who had fought side by side with him at Mining Town, they were more than eager to help pay respects to the many men who had saved their lord's life. As such, the best dishes they could make were piled into the town square, where the soldiers engorged themselves with food and drank from the endless amount of beer that was poured for them by many young women.

After a while of drinking and feasting, Berengar tapped on his mug with a spoon, gaining the attention of his soldiers, who all looked upon him with respect. While still in his armor and just with the helm and cap removed, Berengar stood up from his table and began to give a toast to his men.

"I told you all I would celebrate our magnificent victory over the traitors at Mining Town; unfortunately, my damned noble obligations came up, and I was unable to celebrate with you men properly. Though it has been over a month since we stood side by side on the front lines, I wanted to dedicate this night to you all, the brave men of Kufstein who answered their commander's call in a time of need and brought down an army of traitors! Cheers!"

The town square echoed in cheers as the men celebrated their victory on this fine night. All of which were still in uniform, when the standing army and town guard gazed upon the hundreds of men in the town square in uniform, they began to feel a bit envious, and those who were a part of Lambert's faction began to feel fearful. Though they initially thought this peasant militia was nothing but common rabble formed on a young Lord's whim, they had actually managed to win a battle with zero casualties, which was beyond impressive. As such, Berengar spent the night drinking with his brothers in arms; it was not until 2 AM when Berengar returned to his bed-chamber, where he found Linde waiting patiently naked on his bed.

Berengar approached his lover and began to caress her body. The last words he remembered hearing that night came from Linde as she whispered in his ear seductively and with a devilish grin on her face.

"Master, I've been a naughty girl and need to be punished."

Though he had no way of knowing what she was referring to, he was too drunk to care. Thus he accepted his role and bound the girl with ropes as he began to punish her for whatever misdeed she was informing him about. It would not be until the next day that he fully became aware of what Linde had said to Adela and the feud it had started. By then, it was already too late to

prevent the girls from fighting with one another for his affection, and he would have to endure the consequences of having two women by his side. Luckily neither of the girls were wicked enough to try to take one another's lives.