

Steel 581

Chapter 581 The Iberian Conflict Revisited

In the Sultanate of Granada, Hasan Al-Fadl lie on a large sofa, his head resting in the lap of one of his many wives. While he enjoyed the comfort of his wife's thighs, he read a letter written by his sister. There was one piece of information that he found rather shocking. Not only had Yasmin been pregnant with Berengar's son, but she had already given birth.

It slightly perturbed the young Sultan that his precious big sister had not informed him of this earlier. Still, it shocked him to see how efficient the German Emperor was at breeding. It would appear that every year or two, Berengar put a baby in each of his wives. Just why couldn't he accomplish this feat?

Hasan had four wives, but none of them had given him a son yet. He had children with two of the beauties, yet they were both daughters. As for his other two brides, they had given him stillborns. He thought Allah had cursed him with the cruel fate of not having a male heir. Perhaps this was because he had killed his own brother.

However, now was not the time to sulk about such a topic. Instead, Hasan rose from his seat and drank from the wine in his chalice before dismissing his brides. His Generals would arrive soon to discuss the ongoing efforts to crush the warlords in Portugal and bolster their defenses against the Kingdom of Spain.

Within the hour, the Sultan's guests arrived, dressed in their heavily embellished military uniforms. Unlike Berengar's army, Hasan had gone a bit overboard in creating medals and military honors. So much so that some of these men looked like glorified pincushions with the amount of breast stars protruding from their chests.

In contrast, Adelbrand, who was the commander of all German Forces in the region, was dressed rather modestly. He had just gotten back from the field, and he lacked the time to dress in anything other than his actual combat uniform.

Thus, he wore a field uniform in the arid pattern, with his Grand Cross of the Iron cross hanging from his collar, a breast star belonging to the Order of Saint George, and a ribbon bar that represented the various medals he had earned through valorous action in combat. Unlike the Granadan Generals, who had over a dozen medals each, Adelbrand's ribbon bar merely comprised a single column, despite being the more seasoned General.

When Hasan gazed upon such a contrast in attitude towards combat awards, he felt as if his decision was justified. After all, Granada's Generals looked far more elegant when compared to Germany's more utilitarian approach to uniforms. It was at this moment that the young Sultan finally remembered why he had gathered the various Generals and quickly requested a status update.

"How is the war in Portugal going? We can not fully introduce the agricultural technology that Austria has gifted us with until all the rebels are driven from the lands!"

Field Marshal Ziyad Ibn Ya'is gazed over at his German counterpart before sighing heavily in defeat. Clearly, Adelbrand intended for him to answer this complicated question.

"Your Majesty, we are working our hardest to remove the rebels and warlords in Portugal. However, the people there aren't willingly surrendering to our rule, despite the lawful annexation. I regret to inform you that establishing absolute control over Portugal will be a long, and bloody process.

Though we control the major cities, and ports, individual villages still resist our authority. They have fortified their towns and force us to engage in minor sieges to assert our claim. Since we can not explicitly burn these villages to the ground, we have to smash through their defenses and then kick down the door of every building to drive out the hostiles. This is a process that is boldly being led by our allies' soldiers, as they have the best equipment for the job.

However, the number of German soldiers in Iberia is at an all-time low. His Majesty, Kaiser Berengar von Kufstein, has deployed at most a brigade worth of troops to Iberia, who commonly rotate out of the country. Most of them are fresh graduates from infantry school being led by veteran officers. I believe he intends to make Iberia a proving ground for his soldiers, and does not desire to send more troops for support."

When Hasan heard this, he clicked his tongue before shifting his gaze over to Adelbrand. There was a hint of fury in his voice as he lashed out at the German representative.

"Do we not have an alliance? Why does Berengar treat my realm as some form of a perpetual field of combat for his troops to gain experience?"

Adelbrand did not take the provocation, and instead sneered at the young Sultan, who he realized was profoundly incompetent without the support of his big sister.

"The Kaiser has other affairs to worry about at the moment. As you may be aware, the situation in the east is becoming volatile. The Muslim world is gathering its strength to invade Byzantium and press their claim to the Holy Land once more.

On top of this, the Fatherland is going through unprecedented changes as we are now unified into a single Empire, and the Crown's priority is to kick-start the development of the newly incorporated territories. If that is not enough justification for our actions, then I implore you to take a minute to reflect on the situation that Germany is in.

States who have openly declared their hostility to the Empire surround it. Right now, the primary military focus of our realm is establishing border security, and deterring foreign invasion. Do not forget that it is us who won your wars for you, and expanded Granada into the Sultanate it is today. We have bled more than enough for this land, and we continue to do so at your request..."

This statement came as a surprise to Hasan. Despite his accusations, Adelbrand had masterfully deflected the issue. Sometimes he really couldn't stand the Germans. They always had a sound reasoning for their actions, no matter scandalous they were. For example, everyone in this room, including Adelbrand, knew that Berengar was using Iberia as a proving ground to give his troops experience in warfare.

However, Adelbrand's rebuking of such a claim not only failed to deny the accusation, but listed a series of logical reasons for this being the case while simultaneously making it seem as if Hasan and Granada were absolutely ungrateful for everything the Germans had done for them. Only a German could so

thoroughly make the Sultan speechless. Ultimately, Hasan and his Generals remained silent for a few moments before the young Sultan collected his thoughts and expressed them.

"Very well, I understand the difficulties your Empire is facing, but could you at the very least pass on the word to your Kaiser that it would be most appreciated if we could receive some more support?"

In response to this, Adelbrand put on a graceful facade as he bowed to Hasan before replying.

"Of course, I would be more than happy to relay your request for further assistance."

With this matter settled, Hasan discussed another point of contention in his mind.

"Does the Kaiser know that the Spanish have realized the truth of the matter behind the saltpeter mines in Collbato?"

Adelbrand had a stoic expression as he nodded his head in response to this question.

"While the other Muslims states may provoke conflict with the Byzantine Empire, your Kaiser should know that Spain does the same to us. We have already diverted troops from the War in Portugal to our Spanish Border. King Felipe is calling it a violation of the Treaty of Aquitaine, but he was the first one to act in such a manner.

I believe the fool intends to use the buildup of forces around the borders as an excuse to seize back the saltpeter mines that your armies currently occupy. You should already know that Spain has infiltrated your mines with their agents, and the Catholic world wants its bounty for themselves.

If Spanish Forces were to invade Collbato, I do not have the means to help the Germans trapped behind enemy lines. Whether they survive the encounter is entirely up to your Kaiser and how he wishes to proceed."

Adelbrand sighed heavily as he reflected on this piece of information. He had implored Berengar for some time to increase security around the Saltpeter mines. However, the Kaiser was stubborn in his adherence to the treaty.

As per the terms of the Treaty of Aquitaine. Germany was permitted to keep a limited garrison within a designated area around the mines. This was to ensure that Austria's operations remained unhindered. If there was one thing Berengar absolutely would not do, it would appear to be the aggressor in another war in Iberia. Such a thing was not only bad for Germany, but severely hurt Granada's potential for growth as well.

However, if the King of Spain was violating the treaty himself, then it would give Germany leeway to act as they pleased within Collbato. After all, if pressed by the international community, the Kaiser could always claim that Spain had violated the treaty first, and Germany was merely taking the necessary measures to ensure their people trapped in the region were safe.

Ultimately, the German General spoke with a grave tone as he responded to Hasan's request.

"I will inform the Kaiser of these developments, and insist he send support for our people trapped behind enemy lines. I will let you know when I have an answer..."

When Hasan heard this, he smiled benevolently before thanking the German General for his aid.

"I thank you, Marshal Adelbrand, and look forward to our future cooperation. That is all I had for the day. You are all dismissed."

With this said, the Generals departed from the Sultan's corridors and went about their tasks. The truth of the matter was, Imperial Intelligence was already aware of Spanish movements towards the saltpeter minds, and had come up with a rather unique solution to maintain control over them.

Chapter 582 Bestowing the Spymaster with the Greatest Honor

Within the study of the Royal palace, Kaiser Berengar von Kufstein was seated in his leather-bound chair with a beautiful young woman sitting in his lap. The maiden who graced the Emperor's presence was none other than his wife Linde. The Second Empress of Germany had elected to dress in her intelligence uniform as she prodded her man's chest lovingly.

Sitting in front of the couple on the desk was an empty container which once held two important items. For the sake of Linde's exemplary service to the crown over the years, Berengar had established a new Chivalric Order, and conferred the title of Grandmaster onto his loving wife.

As the Director of Intelligence, Linde had acted as the commander over military intelligence in some of the fiercest conflicts that Berengar had taken part. Though Linde had not fought on the front lines herself, it was largely because of her efforts in intrigue that Berengar now found himself as an emperor.

Berengar knew well that he owed this woman a great deal of debt, and as partial thanks to her efforts, he established The Imperial Order of the House von Kufstein. This was an Imperial Dynastic Order of Knighthood granted to Military Commanders and civilians of Comparable Status who had given exemplary service to the Imperial Family of Germany.

If one were not already a noble, they would be granted the title of Knight, and could use the prefix Ritter von in their surname. By conferring the rank of Grandmaster on his wife, Berengar had made Linde the first female Knight in German History. In doing so, he ensured that all of her offspring were Imperial Knights of Germany as well.

The Medal itself that hung from Linde's neck was designed around two Maltese crosses of different sizes imposed on top of one another. The interior Maltese cross was the shade of white with gilded edges, while the exterior Maltese cross was the color black with gilded edges.

In between the edges of these two crosses was a series of gilded double-headed eagles in the shape of the von Kufstein coat of arms. Contained within the center of the cross was a white enamel outer circle that contained a golden inscription embedded within.

This inscription was written in the German tongue but contained the House motto that Berengar had chosen for his family upon ascending to the higher nobility. Berengar had ripped the words "Blood and Iron" straight from the pages of history, but despite plagiarizing a man who did not exist yet in this timeline, he felt it made a decent motto for his Royal Household.

Inside this outer circle was another circle made entirely of gold, which had the von Kufstein coat of arms embossed within its center. Fixed atop this prestigious medal was a golden crown which acted as the connecting point to the ribbon, that was in the colors of the German Empire. In other words, black, white, and gold.

Linde played with this medal, its matching breast star, and its sash as she thanked her husband for such a prestigious award.

"Thank you, master for all your benevolence. This lowly slave is undeserving of such honors..."

Berengar chuckled when he heard this, before kissing the woman passionately on the lips. Their tongues entertained for several moments before separating. When they caught their breaths, the German Emperor grabbed a firm hold over his wife's ample bottom and whispered in her ears the praise she was looking for.

"Nonsense. If you are undeserving of such prestige, then nobody in my Empire is. You are the reason I have achieved so much in this life, and I have not forgotten the support you have given me over the years."

It warmed the woman's heart to hear that her man thought so highly of her. For a while now, she had been dreading the idea that Berengar was angry with her over not being able to prevent Henrietta's injury. In this moment, she finally felt as if she was ready to ask for Berengar's forgiveness.

"Berengar, my love... please forgive me..."

The fact that Linde had elected to call him by his first name while they were alone together meant whatever was on the young woman's mind was incredibly serious. She normally had a playful attitude, and almost always used the term Master to refer to him when they were in private. Thus, Berengar's expression turned serious, as he imagined all kinds of scenarios that would cause her to beg for forgiveness, rather than punishment.

"Linde, what did you do?"

Linde bit her lower lip as tears fell from her sky-blue eyes.

"I failed you... You needed me to protect you, and your family, and I failed you..."

This sudden revelation instantly confused Berengar. He did not know what she was talking about. Thus, he could only ask for clarification on the matter.

"In what way did you fail me?"

By now, the tears were streaming from the woman's eyes as she clutched onto her husband's tunic with all the grip her dainty hands could manage. Finally, she revealed the thoughts that had been troubling her for months.

"The assassination plot that was against you, the one that ended up injuring Henrietta. I failed to find out about it, and worse yet I couldn't stop it! Since that fateful day, I have gone back and looked through the evidence, and it should have been obvious, but it completely escaped my net of intrigue! I am so sorry Henrietta was injured because of my failures. Please don't hate me!"

When Berengar heard these words, he felt pity for the woman. Had she seriously been living with these thoughts ever since the assassination attempt? He instantly grabbed hold of her head and shoved it into his chest while stroking her silky, strawberry-blonde hair.

"Linde, I love you more than just about anything, you know that. I could never hate you, not unless you betrayed me in some horrible way. What happened to Henrietta was not your fault, it was mine..."

The sobbing woman immediately gazed up towards her husband with her sky-blue eyes. Between sniffles, she asked for clarification.

"What... do you mean?"

Berengar sighed heavily as he revealed the guilt that he, too, had been living with since that fateful day.

"You were just following my orders. It was my idea to take agents from internal security and send them out into the field. I was so obsessed with the schemes I had, and gathering intelligence on my enemies, that I completely forgot my enemies had plots of their own.

I fell into a false sense of security and nearly paid for it with my life. It is not like you were aware of the enemy's plots and failed to warn me of the dangers. If I remember correctly, you even had some choice words about how stupid my plan was. However, like the good little slave you are, you followed my orders. If anyone is to blame for our failures, it is me."

After saying this, Berengar wiped the tears from Linde's eyes before planting a kiss on her lips. The couple entangled their tongues together for several moments before the Emperor broke away and whispered in his wife's ears.

"I meant what I said. Without you, I would never have made it this far. Hell, I probably would have died from your father's schemes all those years ago. Despite what title Adela may have as the First Empress, you have always been, and continue to be, the most important person in my life. The only thing I can say regarding our failures is we must learn from them, so that such a tragedy never again befalls our family."

Having received such high praise, Linde blushed. When she did so, Berengar practically fell in love with the woman all over again. It took a lot to make Linde embarrassed, especially after all the perverted conditioning he had put her through over the years. To see the angelic beauty's reddened cheeks once more while she pouted was truly a sight to behold.

Upon seeing Berengar's smug expression, Linde hid her embarrassment by resting her face on her husband's broad chest. When Berengar witnessed such cuteness, he couldn't help but smile while patting her head. The couple were quite comfortable in each other's arms, so much so that Linde quickly drifted into unconsciousness. When the young Empress was on the brink of entering dreamland, Berengar whispered to her in a soothing voice.

"I love you, Linde..."

After hearing this, a gentle smile formed on Linde's face as she fell completely asleep. As for Berengar, he merely clutched his wife in his arms and allowed her a much needed rest. While he sat there in silence, he reflected on the many women he loved and the position they held in his heart.

If Berengar had to say which of his brides was his favorite, it would without a doubt be Linde. Nobody had sacrificed more in life for the sake of his future than the redheaded spymaster. Though Linde had a habit of scheming against his other girls, Berengar knew she was completely loyal to him, and would never harm someone he thought of as family.

Yasmin was the newest addition to Berengar's harem and was definitely growing on him. Despite this, the Moorish Princess had a long way to go before she could compete with the Habsburg beauty. Still, her mature nature was appealing, and she seemed willing to do anything for her family. A quality Berengar cherished in a woman.

Henrietta, although technically Berengar's aunt, would always be his precious little sister within his mind. Perhaps he was a sis-con, but Berengar had undoubtedly developed romantic feelings for the girl over the years, and he knew she felt the same. In a way she held a significant place in his heart, not only as his darling little sister but also as his lover, and though Henrietta was not his wife, Berengar had taken the young woman as his mistress, and that was something he did not regret.

As for Honoria, the cute and innocent Princess he was knew was dead, corrupted by Berengar's influence into a merciless pirate queen. Though she was still obedient to him, they spent many months apart because of her free spirit, and thus, they simply did not have the time to forge a bond as strong as the one he held with Linde. Still, Berengar loved that woman, although maybe not as much as Linde did...

Adela, on the other hand, was probably dead last in the actual hierarchy of the Emperor's harem. Her Prudish nature and self-righteous attitude had created a significant rift between herself and her husband. Though she held the title of First Empress, the reality was she was just starting to get into the Emperor's good graces and if she ever wanted to compete with Linde in terms of his affection, she would need to have a major character overhaul.

Thus, while Berengar sat and enjoyed the sight of his favorite girl sleeping in his lap, he thought about all the things that had led to his current lot in life. He already had seven children, and yet he was only in his mid-twenties. Most of his wives were even younger. He should probably get to work on another round of offspring while he was still young and full of vigor. With this in mind, Berengar had decided to spend some effort impregnating his wives over the coming days, starting with Linde.

Chapter 583 An Enjoyable Meal with the Family

In the Imperial Palace of Germany, the young Prince Hans sat within the Library with only his sister to keep him company. He was currently reading up on a book about German history, as recorded by the ancient Roman historian Tacitus. Berengar's scholars had translated the book into the German tongue, and Hans found it to be an interesting read.

As for Helga, she was busy painting a portrait of her mother, Linde. Interestingly enough, the art piece contained the woman in her Intelligence Uniform. Despite her young age, the painting was well beyond the capabilities of her peers, and because of this, it didn't look half bad.

While Hans was interested in a variety of school topics, and had a mind built for mathematics and science. Helga was far more creative and spent most of her time engaging in the fine arts. She was an introverted child who only seemed to be social around her brother and mother.

As for her father, Berengar was largely absent from her life. Hell, since the day she was born, he had probably spent more time abroad in wars, then home with his family. However, that had recently changed, and the young girl was becoming more accustomed to her father being around.

While the two royal children conducted their extra-curricular activities in peace, their mother walked into the Library and noticed them. She carried the youngest of their siblings in her arms as she walked up to the two children with an excited expression on her face and hugged them tightly before kissing both of them on their foreheads.

"Hans, Helga, I have prepared lunch for you both. Your father is waiting for us in the Dining room. Come quickly!"

Hans quickly placed his bookmark into the page he left off on, before standing up. As for Helga, she was rather unwilling to follow her mother. Her father was a bit of a stranger to her, and she was usually anxious around him. On top of that, she wanted to finish the painting of her mother, thus she instantly cried out to Linde in rebellion.

"I don't wanna! I'm painting!"

Linde immediately gazed over at the painting and smiled. She quickly lifted the young girl up into her arms with one hand before lecturing the girl.

"Helga, we have to spend some time as a family. Your painting can wait!"

The young princess could only pout as her mother dragged her off to the dining room. Hans quickly became jealous of the attention that Linde was giving his sister, and immediately grabbed hold of her dress while following behind his mother like a little duckling.

"Mother, wait for me!"

Linde put on a pretty smile as she gazed upon her little boy and his eagerness to be by her side. She quickly nodded her head before dragging her three children off to the dining hall, where their father waited for their arrival.

Berengar was busy drinking a nice cold beer with a satisfied expression on his face. Nearly three months had passed since Berengar first drafted the plans for his ice factory, and his workers had recently completed it.

The Emperor was currently using a portion of the first batch of ice to refrigerate his beer. He achieved this via a stainless steel ice box he had created solely to house his a ready supply of his favorite beverages.

In the mind of Berengar, there were few things in this world better than a cold beer with an excellent lunch made by a pretty girl. Shockingly, Linde had made the food herself. Perhaps she felt a sense of competition from Yasmin, who was always cooking Berengar's breakfast.

Over the past few months, Linde had put in an extreme amount of effort into learning how to cook. Luckily, she had a whole kitchen staff to teach her how, and because of this, she had become quite proficient in the means of doing so in a brief period.

Naturally, Berengar did not know how hard Linde had been working to please him behind the scenes, and instead gazed upon the simple dish that sat upon the table with a warm smile. Linde had made an entire tray of bierocks, which were a delicious stuffed role of Volga german origin from his past life, that he had introduced to this world a long time ago.

He could hardly contain his excitement at the prospect of tasting the fruits of Linde's efforts, and had shamefully grabbed hold of one roll and placed it in his mouth. He was just about to take a bite when Linde and the kids arrived. The smiling expression on the angelic beauty's face immediately twisted into a pout as she chastised her husband for his impatience..

"Honey, have you no patience? I told you to wait five minutes while I fetched the kids, and yet you have so shamelessly started without us!"

Honey was a nickname that Linde commonly used regarding Berengar when they were in the company of others. She couldn't very well call him master in public, let alone around their children. When Berengar heard this, he immediately placed the roll down on the table and walked over to his wife and three Children where he gave them each a firm hug. As a master manipulator, Berengar spoke the words he knew would ease Linde's fury without hesitation.

"I'm sorry, babe, but the food looks so delicious, and the idea that my loving wife worked so hard to make such a masterpiece for my family filled me with excitement. I simply could not restrain myself."

The young redheaded mother sighed heavily before letting her man off the hook.

"I'll forgive you this one time, but next time you absolutely must wait for us to arrive. We have so little time together as a family, and I want everything to be perfect!"

Upon hearing this, Berengar nodded his head with a smile before making a promise he knew he couldn't keep.

"I swear, I will wait for you all to arrive before taking a bite next time..."

He knew instantly he would pay for that remark later, but if it got him out of trouble in the present, then so be it. After saying this, he sat down at the head of the table, where Linde took the seat by his side after placing Isle in a high chair nearby. As for the other two kids, they sat as close to their parents as they were able, with Hans on Berengar's side and Helga on Linde's.

Berengar immediately took a bite into the stuffed roll and moaned in pleasure when he tasted it. The crunchy exterior of the roll, with the soft interior filled with ground beef, cabbage, and onion, was truly delicious. When Linde saw her man so pleased with her cooking, she blushed ever so slightly. After swallowing down the hearty role with a cold lager, Berengar could not praise Linde enough.

"Linde, it brings a smile to my face knowing that you care so much about this family that you are willing to take the time out of your busy schedule to learn how to cook a delightful meal for us."

Linde's face flushed red as she accepted the praise with a beautiful smile and a slight nod of the head. As for Hans, he gazed at his father with a curious expression. He did not know why such a simple compliment made his mother act in this manner.

However, the young Prince noted the exact mannerisms that his father made when interacting with his mother. Perhaps one day he could follow the example set before him, and make a woman quiver in excitement with a simple phrase.

As for Helga, she was trying to avoid her father's gaze. She was completely oblivious to the romantic moment occurring between her father and mother. Eventually, Berengar's sight shifted over to Hans. He could tell the boy was studying the interaction between his two parents by a simple look in his eye.

Sometimes, the studious nature of this child outright frightened Berengar, thus he put on an awkward smile as he addressed his son.

'So, Hans, what have you been up to lately?'

Hans gazed up at his father with his sapphire eyes and answered the question with a stoic expression on his face.

"Not much. I've been going to my fighting lessons like you have requested, aside from that I mainly hang out in the library..."

Berengar nodded his head with a smile on his lips as he heard this before asking a followup question.

"So, how are your fighting lessons going? You should be learning unarmed combat techniques at your age, correct?"

Hans nodded his head before answering his father's question like an obedient child.

"We have been learning a lot of grappling, and though we roll on the matt often, our kickboxing lessons are rather boring..."

One of Berengar's brows raised as he heard this question, he immediately inquired further about the reasoning behind such a statement.

"You don't enjoy kickboxing?"

In response to this, Hans merely shook his head before replying with a glint of regret in his eyes.

"No, kickboxing is fun, but the older kids get to spar. I only get to do pad work and drills. After a while, it just becomes boring."

Berengar shook his head. He had never once found pad work or drills to be boring. While it was true sparring was the most fun one could have in the sport of kickboxing without going through an actual fight, he agreed with the instructor, Hans was simply too young to begin such rough training. Instead, he offered words of encouragement to the boy.

"I know sparring seems fun, and it is, but you are still learning the fundamentals. If you wish to become sufficient in the art of hand to hand combat, it takes substantial effort, and training. It is not all about sparring. Even a master needs to work on the pads and with drills.

Besides, this is just the beginning. As you get older, you and other boys your age will train with swords and firearms as well. By the time you are a full grown man, your entire generation will be well trained in the art of war and survival. These are skills that will be needed when you join the military."

When Berengar said this last part, Linde froze, the very idea that her baby boy would one day be forced to join the military like all the other children in Germany gave her a sense of dread. Helga noticed the frightened expression on her mother's face and immediately inquired about it.

"Mommy? What's wrong?"

Linde quickly came back to her senses upon hearing her young daughter's voice and forced a smile on her face as she took a bite from her bierock before responding.

"Nothing, Helga, I was just thinking about the future is all..."

Linde was visibly shaken. Evidently, the idea of her baby boy one day going off to war terrified her. When Berengar noticed this, he grabbed hold of her hand and kissed it gently, bringing her back to a state of reality. When her beautiful sky-blue eyes gazed into his line of sight, Berengar whispered something in the woman's ears that calmed her growing fear.

"It is a man's duty to protect his family and fatherland. One day, Hans will be a great commander, like his father. Do not fret, I will teach the boy well so that he does not foolishly charge into battle like his old man."

After hearing this Linde sighed heavily, though she did not want her precious son to go off to war, she knew it was something that he may have to do as a potential candidate for the Throne, and thus she forced herself to calm the uneasiness in her gut. Berengar then grabbed hold of his beer and took a deep sip before shifting his attention to his baby girl.

"Helga, how have you been lately?"

The girl looked up at her father, then at her mother, as if asking permission to speak to the man. Linde smiled and nodded her head before the young girl began to open up about what she had been up to in his absence.

"I like painting! Do you like painting daddy?"

Berengar chuckled when he heard this, before nodding his head and responding.

"Though I lack the talent for such things, I do enjoy a good painting. If it is something you enjoy, then stick with it, and one day you may be a great artist forever remembered by our people for your brilliance. I believe in you, Helga!"

The little girl smiled upon hearing her father give her such praise and nodded her head before making a promise to the man.

"One day I will be the best painter in all of Germany!"

Berengar merely smiled and nodded his head before responding to the cute little girl.

"Of course, I look forward to the day when I can gaze upon your brilliant art work!"

With this said, Berengar took another bite out of his bierock before washing it down with his lager. It was truly an enjoyable experience to spend a delightful meal with his family. After thinking about this, Berengar decided in this moment to make meals like this a regular occurrence. Not just with Linde, but the other girls as well. After all, he had four wives and children with each of them. After making a mental note of this, Berengar returned his attention to his family, where he enjoyed the rest of the meal together.

Chapter 584 Plotting Revenge

Honorio sat within the confines of her personal quarters with her child Alexandros clutched to her breast. Due to how many wives Berengar had, he had given them each their own bedroom, so that they had a proper space to rest in while he was sleeping with one of his of his brides.

Not all of his women were into group activities like Linde and Honorio were. While Adela had made some exceptions, she typically avoided such debauchery. As for Yasmin, she preferred having the loving arms of her husband only to herself during their intimate moments. Though if ordered to share his bed with another woman, she would not refuse.

While Honorio was breastfeeding her baby boy, she gazed upon a map, with a course plotted to Constantinople. Berengar had promised her that after she had set up his colony in the New World, he would allow her to enact her vengeance on her brother. Not only for the attempt he had made on her life, but for his betrayal to their godfather, Arethas, all those years ago.

She knew now more than ever, action was required. As a pirate queen, she spent much of her time at sea, almost as much as her husband spent in conquest. Because of this, she was rarely up to date on the latest news across Christendom. It had only recently come to her attention that her brother had leaked the agricultural and industrial information that Byzantium had received as a gift from Berengar.

Such a thing absolutely outraged the young woman, and thus she waited for her husband to arrive in her room, as she knew he was currently busy entertaining his other family with an enjoyable meal. While The woman clutched her babe to her breasts, two Eagles were perched nearby.

One was an Eastern Imperial Eagle, which was her long time pet and friend Heraclius, and the other was an Iberian Imperial Eagle who she had thoughtfully named Fabia after the late Emperor Heraclius' first wife. Just where that feathery bastard had gained such an exotic mate, Honorio did not know.

Evidently, it would appear that while she was off visiting the new world, Heraclius had made his way to Iberia and found a mate of his own. Together, the two eagles had created three eggs, which they were currently looking after until they hatched.

Upon seeing that Heraclius was present for his mate and children, while her own husband was off with another woman, Honorio felt slightly bitter. It was true that she and Linde had a special bond, commonly servicing their husband together, and even pleasuring each other while he was away. However, that did not mean she had no bitterness in her heart towards the woman for monopolizing Berengar's time whenever she could.

After all, her relationship with Linde was a byproduct of the relationship she had with Berengar, and her husband would always come first in her mind. She pouted as she thought about this until the door to her room opened, revealing the man she was just thinking about. A smile immediately carved itself upon her face as Berengar entered the room. She was about to get up and rush over to the man, but he was one step quicker.

The young emperor quickly wrapped his arms around the woman before planting a passionate kiss on her lips. After doing so, he gazed down at their son and kissed the boy on the forehead. Having properly greeted the two, he let out a sigh before speaking his thoughts.

"It is rare for the three of us to be together like this as a family."

When Honoria heard this, she frowned before nodding her head in silence. However, Berengar's next words shocked her.

"Well, I'm here to make that up to you. I know I promised you to help get revenge on your brother, and it is about time I lived up to that. So together we will bring down Decentius and avenge your fallen godfather."

Upon saying this, Berengar glanced over at the chart that sat on the nearby table. He then looked back to Honoria and smiled before revealing his thoughts.

"I see you have already prepared without me. Just tell me what it is I need to do, and I will do it..."

Honoria sighed heavily as she heard this before revealing the plot she had come up with to assassinate her elder brother.

"I want you to bring me with you on an official visit to my father. We can use the border crisis with the Timurid Empire as an excuse. While we are there, I will bribe the maid to poison that bastard's food. After it is done, I will reveal what I have done to him, and give him the option to confess his crimes to our father, and receive the antidote, or a die a slow, painful death of poisoning!"

It shocked Berengar when he heard this plan and immediately asked for clarification on the matter.

"You mean to let his fate fall into the hands of your father?"

In response to this, a malicious smile formed on Honoria's face as she revealed the extent of her treachery.

"Of course not. There won't be an antidote to the poison I give him! He will die horribly either way! However, if I know my brother, he will definitely choose to confess his guilt, hoping that I can save him, in doing so forever ruining his reputation before he passes away from this world."

Berengar nodded his head in agreement to this plan and thought upon the plot for some time before sighing.

"I have given my word to support your father with an artillery brigade. I had meant to wait until we fully developed the revolving cannons before deploying them, but I suppose they can make do for the time being with Mk2s and breechloaders. Very well, I will arrange a meeting with your father in Constantinople in the coming days. After we have avenged your godfather, I hope it can bring you some closure..."

Honoria simply nodded her head in silence. There was nothing left to say on the matter. Instead, she thought of an interesting idea with a wide smile on her face.

"You said before while your parents were last here that you wanted to bring me and the girls on a honeymoon, but you have yet to live up to that promise. Perhaps after we kill my brother, all of us can go on a trip to the new world. I have noticed a few small islands that would be perfect to act as our personal vacation home!"

Berengar smiled when he heard this. With advancements in synthetic materials, Berengar could now make some very modern swimsuit designs. If his girls knew what kind of revealing swimwear he had planned for them, they would probably beat him to a pulp in that very moment.

He could imagine after this bloody business was over, being alone with all of his women on a private island, in a beachside villa. Such a thought immediately caused Berengar to smile and nod in agreement.

"Very well, if you have a location in mind, send it to me, and I will dispatch some men to clear the island of any potential hostiles and build a beachside manor for us. It is about time we all spent some quality time together."

When Honoria heard the words "quality time together" come from Berengar's mouth, she knew exactly what he meant, thus she rolled her eyes before agreeing to his terms.

"Deal..."

It was at that moment Berengar had a sudden thought which he could not help but expressing.

"What about the kids?"

Honoria gazed down at the baby boy suckling at her breast and laughed. She had completely forgotten about this matter. She dwelled on it for a few moments before deciding on a course of action.

"We can have your mother look after them. After all, she is their grandmother. As for feeding the infants, we can always temporarily hire a wet nurse. Or perhaps there is someone in your family tree capable of filling the role that you would be more comfortable with?"

The moment Berengar thought about the words "family tree, and boobies" he could only think of one woman who met the description that he would not be taking on the trip with him.

"I'll ask Adela to talk to Ava about the idea. I am almost entirely positive that woman still has some milk in her udders. If not, we can always go with Plan B."

This last part of Berengar's statement instantly confused Honoria, prompting her to ask for clarification.

"Plan B?"

With a proud smile on his face, Berengar nodded his head before shamelessly declaring his perverted intentions.

"Obviously, if the woman is all tapped out, all I need to do is Cuck Wolfgang and impregnate Ava so that she can produce milk again!"

When Honoria heard this, her smile instantly shattered, causing her to glower at her husband. Did this pervert seriously just suggest adultery as an option to his wife?"

Berengar saw the angry expression on Honoria's face and tussled her hair before kissing her on the lips. After doing so, he laughed his comment off as if it was a joke the whole time.

"I'm just kidding Honoria. Why are you so serious?"

The Byzantine Princess simply snubbed her husband and walked away with their infant son in her arms. She could not stand the man when he made jokes like this. Thus, Berengar was left alone in the room, where Heraclius gazed upon him as if he was an idiot. Upon seeing the disdain in the eagle's eyes, Berengar lowered his brows into a fierce glare before rebuking the bird.

"What are you looking at?"

Heraclius merely squawked and flew out the window, not dignifying the German Emperor's hostility with a proper response. As Berengar watched the eagle soar into the sky above, he sighed heavily before leaving the room as well. He had much work to do in preparation for his visit to Constantinople, and little time to do it.

Chapter 585 An Unholy Act in the House of God

Within the City of Kufstein, the light of dawn shone through the Royal Palace's private Chapel. Within this room there was no priest, only an altar, and a large golden cross representing the glory of God Almighty.

Kneeling before this altar was none other than the Empress of Germany, Adela von Kufstein. For some time, guilt had overcome this young woman. Months ago, she had engaged in a rather sinful act with her husband and his other wife. As a woman who grew up in a pious and righteous household, the images of what she did that night mentally scarred her.

However, worst of all was the overflowing lust she felt in her heart when she thought about the taboo acts she performed, simply because of her husband's orders. The more she remembered the carnal acts she engaged in, the wetter she got. However, the most confusing aspect was she kept dreaming about the fierce double penetration she had received from her husband and his other wife. Especially the satisfied look on Linde's face when she thrust away with her hips.

While she was fidgeting on her knees, struggling to maintain her prayers, a young redheaded seductress stood in silence in the doorway, observing her rival's behavior. She could tell by how Adela moved she was sexually frustrated, and thus, a wicked smile appeared on Linde's luscious lips.

The busty vixen approached the kneeling Empress from behind, without a hint at her movements, before Adela realized it a pair of ivory dainty hands wrapped themselves around her well-developed breasts, and forced their way through her dress where they directly grabbing hold of her pink nipples.

Adela instinctively turned her head around in shock, where Linde violated her tongue with her own. No matter how hard Adela tried to push away the woman's assault, she simply could not do so. For Linde was much bigger and stronger than the little Empress could ever have expected.

Instead, what transpired was the two women falling to the floor with Linde on top. The young seductress dashed her hand up the skirt of Adela's dress and began gently massaging her moist cunt. Such a vicious assault to her weak spots immediately caused the young Empress to yelp in surprise before chastising the woman for her efforts.

"No... stop.... we can't... not here..."

However, this pleading only brought out the sadistic side of Linde, as she inserted her fingers into the girl's slithering slit. The penetration immediately caused Adela to moan in pleasure as Linde whispered into her ear.

"I've had enough of your shit Adela, today you submit to me, and recognize my position as Berengar's main bitch! You are nothing more than a pretty figurehead, whose sole purpose is to appease my husband's parents!"

A fierce glare appeared in Adela's eyes as she heard this taunt. She quickly tried to get out from under Linde's embrace, but it was no use. She simply did not have the strength to combat the veteran spymaster. Instead, Linde quickly disrobed her victim while pinning her to the ground. She immediately assaulted the girl's clitoris with her tongue as she suckled away at the girl's lower lips.

Linde was well experienced in Lesbian sex at this point. After all, she had been using Honoria to pleasure herself during Berengar's absence for some time now, and she knew how to make a girl squirt better than anybody. Thus it did not take long for Adela to release her built up liquid all over the Chapel's floor.

The girl instantly gasped in pleasure, searching for her breath as she witnessed Linde disrobe before her. The redheaded beauty had an exceptionally curvy body, with a perfect hourglass figure, massive E cup tits, wide hips, thick thighs and an ample yet toned bottom. Her pastel pink nipples were erect and displayed her excitement. As for her lower body, a heart-shaped tuft of red fur sat prettily above her moist cave, where her juices flowed from her depths, and coated her puffy white labia.

When contrasted with her own petite body, Adela could only stare in astonishment at her rival's beauty. However, Linde's next words enchanted her as the redheaded lass issued a command to her victim.

"Come to mommy..."

As if enthralled by Linde's masterful command, Adela crawled on her knees over to the busty beauty who lie on the ground in front of the altar with her legs spread out. She immediately placed her lips to the magnificent slit in front of her and tried her best to please it. Unfortunately, she did not know what she was doing, and sloppily licked about as if she were an untrained hound.

This amateurish gesture immediately caused Linde to laugh as she accepted the gift from her play thing. Despite Adela's lack of technique, Linde was a sensitive woman. After all the training she had gone through with Berengar, it did not take her much to cum, and eventually she did all over the girl's face. Having completed the foreplay, Linde was satisfied with the results she had achieved and issued a command to Adela, who, as if drunk with pleasure, hastily obeyed.

"Bend over, and spread your pussy."

Adela immediately assumed the position, where she questioned Linde's intentions.

"What are you going to do to me?"

The busty redhead immediately responded by fiercely spanking her rival before chastising her.

"Shut up! Who said you could speak?"

It was at this moment Adela noticed the toy that Linde was adorning over her crotch. It was the same toy she had used during their last encounter to double penetrate her alongside Berengar. She did not

know where Linde had gotten this toy, but she suspected she brought it with her just for this occasion. After Linde had finished fastening her weapon, she walked over to Adela and placed the tip at the entrance of her victim's slit. Before pushing it in, she had one simple statement to make.

"You know Adela, I have yet to repay you properly for the abuse you put me through. The only reason you could do such a thing to me is because my master commanded it. However, he is not here now, and it is time for you to pay the price of your arrogance!"

Before Adela could protest, the massive length of the toy, which was a replica of her husband's shaft, speared her. The once pious queen instantly moaned in ecstasy as her husband's other wife forced the phallic object deep within the depths of her pussy.

With a wide smirk on Linde's lips, she fiercely smacked Adela's small but well-shaped bottom before asking her a question, all the while pumping her hips in and out of the girl's cave as if she were a steam piston.

"How do you like mommy's cock?"

Adela bit her lips, and refused to respond to this statement, which immediately caused Linde to grab hold of her twin tails from behind and pull her head back as she drove the toy deeper into her depths, using the girl's golden locks as handle bars.

"How about now, bitch?"

Adela squirted all over the floor as Linde continued to roughly pound her into submission. The girl quivered in pleasure as a single phrase escape her lips.

"so... good..."

However, Linde was not satisfied with this answer and continued to buck her hips like a woman gone mad

"I'm sorry. What was that? I didn't quite hear it!?"

Adela once more pissed herself in pleasure as the shaft continued to go in and out of her slit at an increasing rate. She could barely form a sentence, but did so for the sake of the woman behind her.

"mommy's cock is so good!"

Upon hearing this, a cruel smile formed itself upon Linde's lips where she released herself from Adela's cave, before shoving her toy into her face.

"Good girl! Now clean mommy's cock with your pretty little tongue..."

Adela was still in her entranced state and quickly did as she was commanded, suckling on the toy as if it were a teat. Though she could not fit the full length of it into her throat, she licked around its sides, ensuring it was extra clean.

Only after Linde had pushed her head aside and taken off the strap-on did she regain clarity of mind. Linde, however, was not convinced Adela was fully under her heel. Thus, she walked over to the girl and sat on her face. Before issuing another command.

"It's your turn to make mommy feel good. You have to properly thank me for treating you so well!"

With this command, Linde had forced Adela into the ultimate humiliation. The young Empress began to lick away at Linde's asshole while struggling to speak the words in between.

"thank... you..."

After cumming on Adela's face one more time, Linde raised herself from her seated position and got dressed once more. As she concealed her heavenly figure with her exquisite undergarments, she had a satisfied expression on her pretty face.

"Good girl, I want you to seek me out once a day. From now on, mommy is going to educate you well. If you do not come to me, I will find you, and treat you far more cruelly than I did today."

After saying this, Linde was fully dressed and immediately departed, not waiting for a response from her newest plaything. As for Adela, she sat naked covered in bodily fluids as she huddled up into a fetal position reflecting on everything that had just transpired.

She had committed such a grave sin in a house of God, and submitted to her rival so easily. She could not fathom just what had come over her. Still, when she thought about what happened, there was a dark corner of her mind that could not wait for tomorrow. There was an intense conflict in Adela's mind as she questioned everything her parents had ever taught her.

One thing was certain: there was no denial that she enjoyed the treatment she had just received. After a serious debate with herself, the girl sighed and gazed off into the direction of the cross with a frown on her face.

"What has religion ever done for me? It has only driven a wedge between myself and my husband. Perhaps Berengar was right all along. If this is the sisterhood he previously spoke about, then maybe I should go along with Linde's games for now, and see what becomes of it. If such debauchery brings me closer to Berengar and his other brides, then it might be worth admitting defeat to that bitch..."

The truth of the matter was Adela had been unhappy for a long time, while all of Berengar's other brides seemed to have the time of their lives. She was well aware of the bond that Linde and Honoria shared, and knew how close Berengar was to the two of them. Perhaps it was time she gave up on her religious inklings and joined the fun.

While Adela was lying naked in the Royal Chapel questing her life's decisions, Linde had visited Berengar in his study, where the woman was now kneeling beneath her husband's desk, sucking on his cock as if it was the tastiest treat in the world. Between the slurping, she asked the most prevalent question on her mind.

"Did I do good, master?"

Berengar smiled as he petted the woman's silky strawberry blonde hair with a smile on his face.

"Yes, Linde, you did very good. If Adela does not seek you out tomorrow, then find her and discipline her well. It is about time that pious little slut understands the position she is in!"

A loving expression formed on Linde's face as she heard her husband's statement.

"Oh master..."

After saying this, Berengar raised the woman up from her knees and sat her on his lap. With a devilish smirk on his face, he spoke the words she was longing to hear.

"It is about time I give you a reward for your efforts!"

After saying this, Berengar spent the next hour making love to his wife. Little did Adela know that Linde's actions were a scheme of Berengar's to get her to fall into line. He had long since grown weary of the girl's self-righteous attitude, and despite his best efforts, she continued to walk around as if she were a living saint. Only by bringing her down to his level, could he get her to wholly submit to his will, and he knew no better way to do that than by letting Linde have her way with the girl.

Chapter 586 Returning to Constantinople

Weeks had passed since the incident between Adela and Linde, and just as Berengar had planned, Adela refused to visit Linde on the following day, which resulted in the redheaded beauty hunting down the Empress and forcing her into a similar humiliating state.

After such an occurrence, Adela begrudgingly visited Linde as the days passed, and slowly but surely expanded their relationship. While this was going on, Berengar and Honoria had made preparations for their journey to Byzantium. At the moment, Berengar was standing in his office preparing one last farewell to his loving bride.

The German Emperor gently wrapped his arms around the redheaded lass and kissed her on the lips before giving his orders to the young woman.

"Linde, in my absence, I want you to continue Adela's training. Don't let up for a second. I want her heart and mind fully submitted to you by the time I return. The only way I can achieve unity in my household is by one of you two girls submitting to the other, and I know who I am betting on. After she has properly overcome her religious upbringing, it will be time for me to invest a considerable amount of effort into the relationship between me and Adela."

Linde merely nodded her head with a pretty smile on her lips before reassuring her husband that she was up to the task.

"Do not worry, master, I will have the bitch grovelling on her knees for you to impregnate her upon your return. I assure you that she will be completely and utterly loyal to our dynasty, and the proper hierarchy, by the time I'm through with her. You should just focus on enjoying your alone time with Honoria. It has been a while since the two of you could be so intimate, and I know she craves for it."

Berengar chuckled as he heard this before petting the girl's silky strawberry blonde hair.

"You are always so supportive of your bitches, alright, I will leave things in your care. I look forward to my return."

Linde gazed into her husband's eyes and kissed him passionately one last time before whispering in his ear.

"I love you more than anything, master!"

With a smirk on his face, Berengar responded to this statement of affection with one of his own.

"I love you too."

After saying this, the young Emperor departed from his palace and disembarked from his household with Honoria and a veteran unit of his Imperial Guard in tail. The journey would be short, but he intended to make a most of it. Perhaps on this quest for vengeance Honoria would finally achieve the closure she needed to move on from her godfather's death, and her brother's betrayal.

Thus, after several days aboard the vessel without incident, Berengar now sat beside Honoria on a comfortable sofa on the ship that was heading towards the Byzantine Empire. For the time being, the personal vessel of the German Imperial Family was a large and luxurious clipper. Until a time where Berengar's ship industries could easily lay down ocean liners, he would continue to use this more primitive sailing ship as his primary means of transportation to allied nations.

This was the first time in a long time that Berengar could enjoy some proper alone time with Honoria, and over the past few days the couple had made the most of it, with nonstop intimacy, whether that was as hugging, kissing, sex, or just plain conversation.

Currently, The Byzantine Princess was sipping on some coffee while a pretty smile formed on her face. Soon, the vessel would arrive in Constantinople and she was finally going to avenge her godfather. However, that was not the thought dwelled in her mind at the moment. Instead, she reflected on how great her life had been since she first arrived in Kufstein. Especially as of late.

Currently, Linde and Honoria had a special bond that was on the brink of romance. Despite this intimate relationship with the redheaded beauty, her heart truly lied with Berengar, and before this trip, it had been some time since the man she loved had shown her the attention she needed. '

Of course, this was not entirely his fault, as she often sailed around the world undertaking acts of piracy and exploring new corners of the Earth. If anything, she was equally to blame for the current state of their relationship. Thus, Honoria was overly eager to share every moment she could with Berengar. However, Berengar's sudden question immediately stunned the woman.

"So, how have things been going with Linde? I understand the two of you get along pretty well during my absence..."

Honoria's face flushed with embarrassment. She did not know that Berengar was aware of her and Linde's relationship and immediately stammered in response.

"y... yo... you knew?"

A wicked smile formed on Berengar's face as he teased the girl.

"Of course! Linde tells me everything, like the good little slave she is. By the way, she quite enjoys being your mommy..."

The young Princess of Byzantium was so embarrassed right now she wished she could jump overboard and drown. She completely misunderstood Berengar's intent in revealing this and immediately bowed her head in guilt.

"Daddy, I'm sorry! Linde, she tempted me in your absence and made me do those things! I never meant to betray you!"

In response to this, Berengar chuckled before kissing the girl on the lips, reassuring he was not the slightest bit angry with her.

"Honoraria, you have nothing to fear from me. Believe or not, I actually approve of this relationship. Obviously, as Emperor, I can't always be there for you girls, and I would much rather you fall in love with each other in my absence than another man.

As long as you both still love me, and Linde hasn't replaced me in your heart, then you have my permission to be intimate with one another. Besides, it's not like the three of us haven't done similar things together.

I'd be a hypocrite if I asked the two of you to be intimate for the sake of my pleasure, but then deny you such a thing for your own sakes. If only the others had the same attitude towards my harem as the two of you."

Tears flowed from Honoraria's eyes as she hugged Berengar as tight as she could while violating his tongue with her own.

"Daddy, I love you so much!"

Despite the many intimate moments that they had shared over the past few days, it appeared as if Honoraria was ready for more. However, before Berengar could enjoy Honoraria's embrace once more, a deckhand climbed down into their private cabin and alerted them of their arrival.

"My Kaiser, my Queen, we have arrived in Constantinople. It will not be long before we are docking. I suggest you prepare yourselves."

With this said, Berengar sighed in disappointment as he helped the young woman off of his lap. Sometimes things simply did not line up as he intended them to. Thus he and Honoraria calmed themselves of their urges before rising onto the deck above. It would be wise not to keep the Byzantine delegation waiting.

In the time since Berengar's first visit to Constantinople, the Byzantines had established a special dock to house his massive clipper. When such a vessel entered the ports of the ancient Roman Capital, it drew all eyes to it.

It was quite obvious who this behemoth of a ship belonged to, as there was only one nation capable of building such a thing. Thus, since the moment they saw the ship on the horizon flying the German colors, the Byzantine delegation had rushed to the docks and secured the area with their forces. They could not afford to offend the German Emperor.

Historically, there were only two men in all of Christendom who could claim the title of Emperor, and that was the Holy Roman Emperor, and his Byzantine Counterpart to the East. However, in the last few months, a new figure had successfully claimed the title for himself. Such a thing was simply outrageous to the people of the Catholic World.

However, the Byzantines were far more accepting of it. Unlike the Holy Roman Empire, Berengar's new German Empire did not claim to be the true successor of Rome. Instead, they denied any part of Roman Heritage, embracing themselves as the successors of men like Hermann and Alaric.

Considering the German Empire was formed by Berengar's conquests of the German-speaking regions, the Byzantines naturally considered the Empire no different from their previous relationship with the Kingdom of Austria.

Thus, when Berengar stepped foot on the docks of Constantinople, he was given quite the prestigious welcoming. With a smile on his face, he latched onto Honoria's hand as they gazed upon the Byzantine delegation, which greeted them with open arms. A simple expression escaping his lips after a heavy sigh.

"Are you ready for this?"

In response to this question, Honoria looked into her husband's eyes and smirked with her beautiful lips before making a smug statement.

"I was born ready!"

Berengar admired the woman's fierce resolve. It was difficult to do something as wicked as killing your own brother. After all, Berengar knew this pain all too well. However, Honoria was no longer the helpless young Princess she once was. She had become not only a feared Pirate Queen, but a conqueror in her own right.

Thus, Berengar did not doubt that his beloved wife had the means to endure such an evil act. Because of this thought, a bitter smile formed on his lips as he gazed toward the ancient Roman Capital with fierce determination in his sapphire eye.

"Very well. It is time to enact our revenge, and in doing so, secure our son's future as an emperor!"

With that said, the German Emperor and his wife, the Byzantine Princess, had returned to Constantinople under the guise of negotiating military aid in support of the Byzantine Empire's current border crisis. In truth, their reason for visiting was a much more sinister purpose: to kill the second prince of the Byzantine Empire and avenge the loss of the late Strategos Arethas.

Chapter 587 An Unexpected Reunion

Berengar and Honoria stepped down from the dock and greeted the emissary sent by the Byzantine Crown to welcome their German guests. The man in question was someone that Berengar did not recognize. He appeared to be in his thirties and was fairly tall for an eastern man. The man had light olive skin, brown eyes, and wavy dark hair that fell to his shoulders. He also sported a finely groomed beard, giving him a rather striking appearance.

The fact that Vetrans had sent a stranger to greet Berengar filled his mind with a sense of caution. After all, he and his bride were in Constantinople for a hidden and treacherous purpose that, if revealed, would undoubtedly cause some serious diplomatic issues. However, despite his paranoid thoughts, Honoria seemed to know who this man was and had an over excited expression as she rushed over and into his arms.

"Uncle Besarion! I thought you were in Georgia. What are you doing here in Constantinople?"

The man immediately broke out into a slight chuckle as he held onto his niece and observed her carefully. If Vetrans had not told him that Honoria would arrive on this very dock, he would not have believed this woman was in fact his beloved niece. Thus, with a surprised expression on his face, Besarion voiced his disbelief.

"Honoria, is it really you? You have changed so much since I last saw you!"

In response to this, Honoria merely scoffed before spitting out her tongue, followed by a snarky remark.

"Of course I have. The last time we met, I was still a little girl! Did you think that after a decade I'd still be a child? Obviously I grew up!"

This caused the man to chuckle once more. What the girl said was true, still he could not believe that his once adorable little niece had grown into such a gorgeous young woman. Thus he gazed over with a stern expression to the man standing by Honoria's side, who he presumed to be her husband.

Berengar met the man's gaze with an intimidating glare. The German Emperor was a man with an extremely jealous nature, and to see a man touch his wife, even if it was purely familial, filled him with a sense of rage.

Thus, he hatched a devilish scheme in his mind that would force the Georgian King to bow before him and apologize in the near future. After thinking of this, Berengar put on a friendly facade, and introduced himself to Honoria's uncle.

"I am afraid we have not properly met. Allow me to rectify that. I am Berengar von Kufstein, Honoria's husband."

Berengar had deliberately left out his title while introducing himself. It took little examination to understand that Honoria's uncle did not know who Berengar was. For if he did, he would have already introduced himself, and begun kissing ass as so many other petty Kings had done as of late.

Besarion, on the other hand, gazed up and down as he scrutinized the man claiming to be his niece's husband. It was evident by the expression on his lips that he was not pleased. In his discontent, he accidentally muttered a single phrase that caught Berengar off guard.

"too pretty..."

When Berengar heard this, his brow raised ever so slightly. Did this man seriously just call him pretty? However, before he could react, Besarion put on a smiling facade and disguised his conceited words with a friendly gesture.

"So you're the man who seduced my darling little niece. I understand she even ran away from home to be with you! I'm amazed Vetrans allowed you to keep your manhood intact! I am Besarion Bagrationi, the King of Georgia. It is a pleasure to meet you."

Berengar surmised that this man had heard some rumors about Honoria running off to a faraway Kingdom, but judging by his behavior, it was highly unlikely that he knew about Berengar's position in the world.

However, despite the obvious provocation, Berengar did not buy into it and instead responded by putting on a smile, and grabbing ahold of the man's hand, accepting the token of friendship while offer some friendly advice.

"It would appear someone has been speaking ill of me behind my back. Perhaps it is that fool Decentius? Whatever, such infantile defamation is of no concern to me. However, for future reference, I would advise you not to give such petulant rumors any thought. You never know what reprisal might occur should you accidentally slander a powerful emperor to his face."

Besarion immediately responded to this comment with a fit of laughter. Such a scenario was simply implausible. There was no way he would accidentally insult an emperor to his face. Thus, his impression of Berengar was little more than that of a pretty boy and a clown, a view which he did not hide.

"You're a funny man! I can see why my niece would choose a pretty boy like you to be her husband."

When Berengar heard this remark, he stiffened on the spot. The man had once more called him pretty. Perhaps this man from the east was mistaking his handsome and regal Germanic features as "pretty".

Honorio saw the perturbed expression on Berengar's face and could immediately see things were getting tense between her uncle and her husband. Thus, she did not hesitate to separate the two of them.

"Alright, that's enough, Uncle. Why are you here?"

Such a harsh response shocked the King of Georgia. He could not believe his darling little niece had chosen Berengar's side. Besarion sighed in defeat as he came to a misunderstanding. In his mind, there was only one reason that his precious niece would choose this man's side over his own. Obviously Berengar had captured Honorio's heart with his good looks. There was simply nothing he could do about that, thus he instead happily answered the question.

"The crisis on Byzantium's border has spread to my realm. Since your father is my brother by law, I figured the two of us should come together to solve the issues we face. Although, he failed to mention in advance that there would be another joining us for this convention.

It was not until your ship was on the horizon that your father informed me of your visit, thus I figured I would greet my beloved niece in person. Come Honorio, we have much to catch up on, and little time to do it."

With that said, Besarion led Honorio back to the Palace, where Berengar followed behind. Throughout the entire journey, The Georgian King treated him as if he was a third wheel. From this first encounter, the German Emperor did not have a good impression of his wife's uncle. Eventually the trio made their way into the Palace where Vetrans was quick to greet his daughter, and more importantly her husband.

"Berengar, Honorio, it is so nice to see the two of you. It has been a while since I last laid eyes on you, and I only wish our meeting was due to better circumstances."

Berengar nodded his head with a smile on his face. If there was one thing he could say about Vetrans, it was that the man knew how to treat a foreign monarch with the respect he deserved. Thus, Berengar had a far more cordial approach as he greeted his father-in-law.

"Father, it is good to see you doing so well. Though the circumstances that brought us together may be grim, it is still an occasion for celebration. I have brought with me some fine spirits as a gift to you and your house."

After saying this, Berengar clapped his hands, and some of his servants came forth and delivered the goods. In a well crafted and lacquered wooden box lie a bottle of liquor. This was no mere whiskey, but a single malt bourbon that had been aged for the last five years.

This bottle was from the German Emperor's personal stock, and there was a limited quantity of it in the world. Thus, to give such a priceless item, which had no equal in the world to his father-in-law, was a sign of Berengar's respect for the Byzantine Crown.

Vetranis smiled as he gazed upon the finely made label, which proudly displayed the von Kufstein coat of arms and was written in the German language. The Imperial Family of Germany had many of its own businesses, among these were breweries and distilleries.

Thus, it came no surprise that Berengar had his own brand of bourbon. After examining the exquisitely crafted glass bottle for several moments, Vetranis nodded his head in acceptance and thanked his son-in-law for his gift.

"Thank you Berengar, I am sure it is of superb quality, and I can't wait to drink it at tonight's feast. I will have one of my servants show you and Honoria to your room. As for our strategic meeting, we will hold it tomorrow morning, so take that into consideration as you enjoy your stay."

Berengar smiled and nodded his head before walking off with Honoria, leaving Emperor Vetranis behind alone with his brother-in-law. Besarion had an expression of contempt on his face as he voiced his disapproval to Vetranis the moment the German Emperor was out of earshot.

"Your behavior towards that pretty boy is unbecoming of a man of your position. I don't know which of the German States he hails from, but to see you kiss his ass is sickening. Could you really not find a better suitor for your daughter?"

Vetranis immediately turned over and glared at Besarion before lecturing him about his ignorance.

"Please tell me you did not call that man pretty to his face? Is your petty Kingdom truly so isolated from the rest of Christendom that you do not know who that man is? That is Berengar von Kufstein, the emperor of Germany. That "pretty boy" as you so brazenly refer to him as is a warlord of fierce repute. In six years, he rose from the position of a lowly baron to the most powerful man in the western world!

Since the moment he first came to power, Berengar has fought a series of wars against the great realms of Europe and remains undefeated in battle. If you want a proper understanding of his character, you need only look at his eyepatch. Berengar received that wound from his brother, a commander of the Teutonic Knights, who he slew in single combat."

It shocked Besarion to hear this. The truth of the matter was he was completely unaware of Berengar's rise to power. Most of the German Emperor's reputation existed west of the black sea. For those who dwelled East of Constantinople, the existence of a unified Germany had yet to reach their ears, let alone the fact that a man of lower nobility had caused it. Thus, after hearing this information, the King of Georgia immediately bowed his head to the Byzantine Emperor and apologized.

"I am sorry if I caused any trouble. I did not know."

In response to this, Vetrans merely scoffed before giving the man some friendly advice.

"It is not me you should apologize to. I trust you will smooth things over at dinner. Be aware that Berengar has a sharp wit and a fierce personality. No matter how clever you think you are, I would avoid verbally sparring with that man if I were you."

After saying this, Vetrans left the Georgian King alone with his thoughts. It was at this moment he reflected on Berengar's earlier words about accidentally slandering a powerful emperor to his face, and felt as if someone had killed his dog. Besarion could not believe he had actually made such a foolish mistake. He knew now he would have to formally apologize to Berengar later in the evening. Thus the German Emperor's arrival in Constantinople had started off interestingly enough...

Chapter 588 A Living Hell

Deep within the Tyrolean Alps, the light of dawn shone down onto the fields of the Austrian Landscape. Located within a specific corner of the great German Kingdom lies a large timber industry. If one were to gaze upon this particular forestry camp, they would immediately realize the extensive fortifications that surrounded it. Where heavily armed guards acted as sentries, keeping the prisoners within under lock and key.

The Kingdom of Austria did not tolerate crime in any form, and aside from those most heinous of criminal acts that were dealt with via execution, the overwhelming majority of convicted criminals served a lengthy sentence within a labor camp. After all, the Austrian King was a man of brutal efficiency, and he refused to pay for criminals to sit on their ass and do nothing productive for years on end.

In a way, this harsh justice not only acted as a deterrent to crime in general but also aided in rehabilitation as the many criminals would gain valuable trade skills during their sentence, and could be employed in that field should they have no other options.

However, there were many criminals within these Labor Camps who came from a background of some significance, none more so than the Princess of France Sibilla de Valois. For the past year or so, she had been imprisoned against her will for offending the Austrian Royal Family, where she engaged in backbreaking work as a lumberjack.

Thus, as the sunlight shone down upon this camp, the Princess of France lie asleep in her cell. However, she was not alone. There was a big and burly man spooning with her. Unfortunately for this man, his time with the young beauty ended rather abruptly as the bells rang in the air, signalling that it was time for the prisoners to awaken.

With a groggy expression on her face, Sibilla rose to a seated position on her bed mat and slapped the man upside the head, instantly waking him up. Where the first thing he witnesses was a sour expression on the French Beauty's otherwise exquisite face.

"You spent the night with me, so that will be twenty-five scrip! If you cannot pay, I swear to god I will get Heinz to cut your balls off!"

The bald and burly man was still half asleep as he heard this, however the last part of the whore's threat immediately sent chills down his spine, and the man quickly nodded his head before handing over the requested currency.

As with any prison, there was a local hierarchy and a currency that went with it. A single gang had formed within the confines of this labor camp, and the man who led it was known as Heinz. The guards used Heinz and his gang to keep the order of the prisoners while enjoying the benefits of their localized economy.

This shot caller was a smuggler by trade who had been arrested and sentenced to twenty-five years in this labor camp. His crime? One of his buyers had used his product in a murder. As the man responsible for bringing such a thing into the country, the courts found him guilty as an accomplice, along with half a dozen other charges.

Since he was going to be spending the rest of his life in this Labor Camp, the man had used his skills to bring in certain items that helped keep the prisoners alive, all while charging a premium for access. Often times this contraband was the difference between a prisoner living through their sentence or dying miserably. This was especially true during the harsh winters of the Tyrolean Alps.

However, Heinz also dealt in other products, such as prostitutes, and being one of the few female prisoners in the camp, Sibilla was a well sought after product. Of course, nobody knew she was the Princess of France, or else Heinz would have kept the bitch to himself.

Though Sibilla had initially refused the prospect of whoring herself out for access to Heinz contraband, after a particularly brutal gang rape, she soon found herself spending all of her free time servicing the men imprisoned within this encampment. After all, at least with prostitution, she had a say in how she was treated.

Because of this degrading side profession, the Princess of France could survive her imprisonment, but the cost to her mental well being was far too great. However, there was hope in her heart, as her sentence would end in another few weeks, and she could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thus, she quickly collected the prison currency used to buy her body for the night and kicked the burly man out of her cell. She needed to prepare for the long day of backbreaking labor ahead of her. Eventually, she left her cell and proceeded to the showers, where she bathed alongside the men.

They all gazed lustfully at her curvy body, and if not for the protection that Heinz provided her, would surely gang rape her then and there. Luckily Heinz had a fierce reputation in how he handled those who cheated him, and he would allow no one to lay a hand on his hookers without paying a price.

Thus, Sibilla was able to bathe in peace before beginning her journey into the timberlands. With an axe in her hands, she chopped away at the tree. A lifeless glint existed in her eyes. For too long she had suffered under the horrific conditions of this labor camp and had lost a substantial amount of weight doing so. If not for Heinz's contraband, she surely would have starved long ago.

Just a few more weeks, and she would be out of here. Those were the thoughts that plagued her mind as she tirelessly worked in the woodlands, chopping wood from dawn until dusk. When she finally returned to the camp, she met up with Heinz and handed him the currency she had collected in the morning.

"Here's the payout from last night. Now give it to me!"

The man named Heinz had a particularly lavish cell with an actual mattress, a personal shower, and a stove. Such were the perks of being the man at the top of the prison hierarchy. With a shit-eating grin on his face, Heinz counted the tin currency before nodding his head.

"Very well, as always, you get a choice. Would you rather have a nice hot meal, or do you want a hit?"

Sibilla hastily answered the man's question with an impatient expression on her lips.

"Give me the hit! I'll suck someone's cock later tonight for the meal..."

Heinz nodded his head before pulling out a small glass pipe which was already loaded with a bowl filled with cannabis. Smuggling drugs into the prison was difficult, but for those who could afford it, it offered the only release they could gain from their living hell within this labor camp. Thus, Sibilla quickly took the pipe to her mouth, and smoked its contents with much enthusiasm. After doing so, she exhaled a large plume before lying back on the man's sofa and dazing out.

Heinz gazed at the French Princess with a lust filled gaze as he quickly disrobed himself, and the girl in front of him before having his way with her. As for Sibilla, she was too stoned to care and had long since grown accustomed to being fucked multiple times a day. After their session was over, and the French Princess started coming back to reality, she asked the question on her mind.

"Alright, who do you have lined up for me tonight?"

Heinz was in the process of putting on his trousers as he heard this and smiled wickedly before giving the info to the woman about her next clients.

"A group of guys have pooled together their scrip and have decided to have an orgy with you. One of their boys is getting out tomorrow, and they want him to have fun with the most beautiful girl in this prison on his last night behind bars. Make it worth their while and not only will I give you a hot meal, I will also throw in an extra hit free of charge."

Sibilla frowned when she heard this news, but ultimately sighed in defeat. She quickly got dressed in her clothes and nodded her head in agreement to the terms.

"I understand. Tell them to come to my cell right before we go into lockdown and I'll drain every last ounce of cum in their balls. When I'm through with them, you better pay up!"

Heinz immediately feigned offense as he responded to his most profitable hooker.

"Hey... you know me, I'm a man of my word."

In response to this, Sibilla merely snarled in disgust before getting back to her job. This was a random day in the prison life of the Princess of France. When she finally returned to her homeland, she would have a body count in the thousands, and would have changed for the worse. Whether she could ever recover from such harsh imprisonment, only time would tell.

Chapter 589 Poisoning a Prince

Within the Imperial Palace of the Byzantine Empire, three factions were gathered. The King of Georgia and his family sat at the left side of the table, while the German Emperor and his wife sat on the right. As for the Byzantine Emperor and his family, they sat at the head of the table. Berengar had a conceited expression on his handsome face as he bantered about the current border crisis.

"The sheer nerve of the Timurid Empire, causing trouble at your borders. If it were me, I would not tolerate such insolence..."

With a bitter smile on his face, Vetrans addressed Berengar's bold statement with a humble counter.

"Unfortunately, the Byzantine Army is still undergoing a massive restructure. The Strategos' who hold control over vast portions of my army are reluctant to relinquish control. To put it simply, unlike the German Empire, we here in Byzantium are not prepared to take on the Arab world by our lonesome. It is with this in mind that I am thankful for both of your presences."

Besarion gazed upon the heated conversation between his brother-in-law, and this strange emperor from the west. The sheer arrogance in Berengar's voice led the man to believe he was either a fool, or could truly backup his words with overwhelming power. Though he was more inclined to believe the former, Vetrans had warned him of Berengar's might, and if this man intimidated the Byzantine Emperor, then clearly he should be, too."

While the three kings bickered over the rising conflict with the Timurids, Honoria whispered something in Berengar's ear that went unnoticed by the others. However, a smirk appeared on Berengar's face before nodding his head in approval for the woman to depart. With a gracious bow, Honoria informed the party of her temporary absence.

"I must apologize, but I am having some... erm... Womanly troubles. I am afraid that I must take a leave of absence for the time being..."

After saying this, Honoria departed. Meanwhile, the gathered people continued on their heated political discussion. As Berengar entertained the Royal Family of the Byzantine Empire, and their guests, Honoria snuck off to the kitchen. Where she could unleash her vile plot to expose and assassinate her elder brother.

One thing the Byzantine Princess immediately noticed when she first sat down for the meal is that her elder brother Decentius was not present for the discussions, thus she figured they would feed the man via a separate plate. As she looked for the food intended to go to the Second Prince, she noticed something shocking. There was not a plate reserved for the man, but a cup with what appeared to be a mashed up meal contained within.

It was only now that Honoria realized the extent of Decentius' injuries, the man could no longer eat solid food, and thus relied on meals similar to that which infants ate in order to sustain himself. When Honoria thought of the poor state her elder brother must be in, a wicked smile appeared on her face. She instantly reached into her bosom, and pulled out a small vial, filled with a white powder, where she uncorked its lid before pouring a small concentration of the poison into the mashed meal.

"Eat well, big brother, because this meal will be your last!"

After carefully stirring the substance to ensure the poison was concealed, Honoria fled the kitchen. It would appear her presence had gone completely unnoticed, and thus she fled to the bathroom, where she quickly mixed the vial's remaining contents with water, creating an opaque white liquid.

If not for trade with Austria, then the Byzantine Royal Palace would not have the plumbing necessary to create running water. The very idea that her husband had helped her family live a life of greater luxury brought a smile to the Princess' face where she returned to the dining room, and took her seat next to her husband as if nothing had happened.

Now that Decentius' meal had been poisoned, it was only a matter of time before he started showing symptoms. When he did, she would reveal her plot, and force him to confess his sins. Honoria could hardly wait for such a result, and because of this, she was practically squirming in excitement. Berengar immediately noticed this anxious behavior and responded by grabbing ahold of the girl's hand where he kissed it gently, before whispering in her ear.

"Calm yourself. We don't want your family getting suspicious."

After a deep breath, Honoria calmed her heart before involving herself in the discussion at hand.

"So, have you come to a consensus on what to do about the current border crisis?"

Vetranis smiled upon seeing that his daughter was interested in the subject and responded emphatically.

"The actual strategic meeting is tomorrow. Tonight we are merely brainstorming. However, your husband has made an interesting point. If we placed enough artillery on our borders, it may be enough to deter any invasion, or at the very least buy our armies enough time to enter the fray."

When Besarion heard this, he sighed before commenting his own opinion on such a reckless tactic.

"Or our enemies could see such action as a provocation to war. By amassing artillery on our borders, we are sending an obvious threat that we are willing and prepared to engage in war. They will surely respond in kind, or if they can not, then they will find other means to instigate us into making a diplomatic error.

This kind of strong-arm diplomacy will only further increase tensions between our two realms. What we should be doing is consider a policy of de-escalation so that we can avoid a war if at all possible."

When Berengar heard this pacifistic approach, he merely scoffed before arguing with the Georgian King.

"Might makes right, and a show of force is the only thing the Arabs will understand. If they are truly hell bent on waging Jihad for the Holy Land, then no amount of diplomacy will solve our difficulties. By withdrawing our forces from the border, we would foolishly create an opening for them to attack; something I am positive they will capitalize on. There are some matters in life that can only be settled with blood and iron, and this is one of them!"

Besarion could not stand such a hawkish attitude. It was one reason he supported Quintus, and his claim to the Byzantine Throne, thus he asked the First Prince his opinion on the matter.

"What do you think, Quintus? Do you agree that by amassing artillery brigades on our Eastern Border, we will only escalate conflict with our neighbors?"

The First Prince of the Byzantine Emperor smiled and nodded as he made a snide remark about Berengar's hawkish nature.

"Oh, undoubtedly, unlike the Tyrant of Steel here, I do not believe that conflict is ever completely unavoidable. However, I can see why Berengar must have such a mindset. After all, the man has waged war against most of his neighbors, and spat on their religion in the process. In Byzantium, we are far more civilized, and can solve our disputes with words, not bloodshed. Unlike the Germans, we Romans do not start wars wantonly."

When Berengar heard this retort, he scoffed at the First Prince's naivety, and instead remembered of a quote from his past life, attributed to the Great King Charles XII of Sweden. With a confident smirk on his face, Berengar took a sip from his wine before responding to Quintus' remarks.

"In this life, I have resolved never to start an unjust war, but never to end a legitimate one, except by defeating my enemies. If you wish to rule this Empire one day, you will need to grow a spine and realize that sometimes war is inevitable."

Quintus was about to comment on Berengar's witty retort, yet was cut short when Vetranis spoke up on behalf of the German Emperor.

"Berengar is right. Our intelligence has confirmed that the sole intent of the Timurid Empire is jihad. They wish to reclaim the Holy Land, and that is something we cannot allow. We will discuss our options on how to deal with our enemies further tomorrow morning. For now, let us just enjoy this feast."

With that said, the political discussion had come to an abrupt end. They spent the rest of the meal catching up on personal matters. However, in another corner of the Palace, Decentius sat in a chair. He was missing one of his legs, one of his hands, and a good portion of his face. He gazed out of the window, into the starry night sky, and cursed his fate.

"I swear I will get back at you one way or another for this grievous injury!"

At this moment, a knock resounded on his door, followed by the voice of a servant.

"Your Majesty, I have prepared a meal for you!"

With a heavy sigh, Decentius put his vengeance to the back of the mind before calling out to the servant, giving them permission to enter.

"It is open..."

After saying this, the door crept open, and the servant carried the cup which contained the Prince's meal over to him. They remained utterly silent as they inserted a straw into the container before handing it over to the prince. With a pretty smile on the servant girl's face, she wished the Decentius a cheerful meal.

"Enjoy your meal, your Majesty!"

Having fulfilled her duty, the servant girl then left the Second Prince by his lonesome to eat in peace. When he was finally alone in his room, Decentius gazed upon the mashed meal with a frown before bringing the straw to his lips and taking a drink from the meal.

In doing so, Decentius had unknowingly just consumed the poison that Honoria had prepared for him, and ultimately sealed his fate. It would not be until much later in the night before the Prince realized he had been poisoned, and when he did, Honoria would be there to coerce him into a confession.

Chapter 590 Avenging Arethas

Hours had passed since the Byzantine Princess had poisoned her brother, and by now the man was showing symptoms. His muscles cramped and spasmed, while he sweated up a storm. After a few hours, vomiting became a frequent occurrence, and the prince was left alone in his room as a dying man.

However, just when the man thought he would enter the afterlife without his family being the slightest bit aware, the door to his room crept open to reveal a curvaceous purple haired beauty who had a wicked smile on her face. She spoke to the man in a mocking tone, as if feigning her worry.

"What's the matter, big brother? Aren't you feeling well?"

When Decentius saw this, he wanted to scream at the girl with all the hatred in his heart, but only vomit came from his mouth. When Honoria saw this, her wicked smirk settled into one of calm wrath as she listed the symptoms the man was enduring in a taunting manner.

"Muscle cramps, profuse sweating, projectile vomiting. My brother, it would appear that you have been poisoned! Now, just who in this world would do such a thing?"

When Decentius heard his sister's provocation, he scowled; after wiping the vomit from his mouth, he could finally ask the question most present in his mind.

"You fucking bitch! What did you do to me?"

In response to this, Honoria feigned ignorance as she walked closer to her brother, gaining a firm control over the situation with a confident stride.

"Me? I am sure I have no idea what you are talking about. However, I must say whatever has been done to you is much deserved. After all, you are a murdering bastard who not only killed his own godfather in cold blood, but also plotted to assassinate his little sister during the later days of her pregnancy. Such despicable scum deserves only the worst of deaths. However, far be it from me to act without mercy. I'll have you know that I just so happen to have the cure for what ails you right here!"

After giving Decentius this false hope, Honoria reached into her bosom and pulled out the same vial she had used to poison him earlier. The man feebly reached out to take it, but was ultimately batted away by his captor.

"Now, now, Decentius, I never said that I would give it to you for free! There is a price that needs to be paid if you wish to save your own hide..."

The Second Prince of the Byzantine Empire gulped down the vomit that had poured into his mouth before nodding his head as quickly as his poisoned body would allow him to. He could only spit out a single word without throwing up his stomach's bile.

"Anything!"

With a wicked smirk on Honoria's face, she did not hesitate to give her demands.

"Confess your sins to our father and mother. If you do that, I will give you peace..."

Decentius knew that confessing to the murder of Arethas, and the attempted assassination of his sister, would most likely result in either his execution or banishment. It wholly depended on his father's mood. However, if he did not do so, then he would surely die from this poison that pervaded throughout his body. Thus, with great resentment, the man nodded his head and agreed to Honoria's terms.

"Fine! Take me to them. I will confess what I have done to our family if it means I get to live!"

A cruel smirk appeared on Honoria's pretty face as she nodded her head before lifting her fallen brother onto his wheelchair.

"Good, let's go now. The sooner you confess, the sooner I will give you the antidote!"

After saying this, the Byzantine Princess hastily wheeled her crippled and poisoned brother to the Great Hall where Berengar, Besarion and the Byzantine Royal Family were currently engaging in polite conversation.

When Honoria entered the room with the puke stained Decentius, the entire gathering became silent as they gazed in horror at the second prince and his current condition. Before his parents could inquire about just what had happened to him, Honoria boldly made her declaration.

"Father, mother, Decentius here has something he would like to confess to everyone! Go on big brother, confess your sins to our family and I will give you peace as I have promised!"

The Second Prince had become exceptionally feeble and struggled to proclaim his guilt to his family. However, in the end, the Second Prince admitted his guilt to the Byzantine Emperor with multiple witnesses present.

"Father... Mother... I confess... I am the one who killed Arethas, and after doing so, I attempted to assassinate Honoria while she was pregnant with her child..."

After saying this, Decentius puked all over the floor and collapsed in his chair, barely conscious, waiting for his father's response. Vetrans was equally shocked and furious at the current situation. Moments ago, he was enjoying a friendly conversation with his allies, yet now his second son was dying in front of him, confessing to two heinous crimes. The Byzantine Emperor could only find one person to blame for this odd occurrence and instantly lashed out at his daughter.

"Honoria? What the hell did you do to him?"

The Byzantine Princess did not deny her crimes, and instead boldly admitted to her Father exactly what it was she had done, and her reasons for doing so.

"I have only done what you have taught me, to pursue justice against the wicked! Without taking such drastic actions, this bastard's crimes never would have come to light, and Arethas could never rest in peace in the house of the Lord! All I have done, I did to avenge my godfather."

Between his vomiting, Decentius snarled in disgust. However, he could not think of a proper retort. Eventually The Empress of Byzantium gazed upon her dying son with fury in her eyes. She could not

understand why the boy had been so ruthless, and thus she asked for his reasonings for engaging in such evil.

"Why Decentius? Why would you kill Arethas? He was your mentor, your friend! He was practically a member of this family! I just don't understand why you would do such a thing!"

Decentius did not want to answer this question. It was not like the truth was anything but insidious. However, when he remained silent, Honoria dangled the vial that supposedly contained the antidote in front of him, forcing him to reveal his wicked intentions.

"I killed Arethas because of this little whore! She foolishly ran away from home, and into the arms of this German Bastard. You tasked me to find her, and I failed! Because of this, my standing in the court was thoroughly ruined, and I in the hour of my desperation, I needed something to put me back in contention for the throne. Obviously I couldn't kill Quintus, as he was too well protected for me to get to, so I did the only thing possible: I killed Arethas so that I could steal the glory for the conquest of Egypt and Cyrene!"

The Empress of Byzantium gazed at her son as if he was a stranger, while Vetransis shook with rage. He could not believe he had raised such a murderous cunt. He refused to look at his son any longer, and instead left his fate up to Honoria.

"Honoriam, do whatever you think will bring Arethas justice. I have no son!"

Obviously, Vetransis was being hyperbolic as Quintus was within the room gazing upon the entire scene in horror. However, when Decentius heard his fate was left up to Honoria he smiled, believing he had received salvation and began to beg to his sister for the peace she had promised him.

"Honoriam, my sweet sister, you promised to spare me if I confessed my guilt."

In response to this, a wicked smile formed on Honoria's lips as she pulled out the vial containing the liquid poison and opened its cork. She quickly fed the substance to her older brother, who had a relieved expression on his face. However, such a euphoric state did not last long, as within seconds, the man foamed at the mouth before collapsing to the ground. One last phrase escaped his lips before his body hit the stone cold floor.

"But.... you promised!"

In response to this, Honoria sneered in disgust at her now deceased brother before answering his question for everyone present to hear.

"I promised to give you peace. I never said I would save you..."

Besarion gazed in shock at his purple haired niece as if she were a complete and total stranger. The kind and innocent girl he once knew had so mercilessly taken her brother's life in front of him. He could not believe such a thing had happened, and yet his eyes did not lie.

Everyone except for Berengar stood silent, in shock at what had just happened in the middle of the Royal Palace. The German Emperor merely watched the family drama unfold as if it were the finest works of Shakespeare, all while sipping on wine. After the deed was well and truly done, he approached his wife's side and wiped the bangs from her mint green eyes before asking the questions on his mind.

"Do you feel better? Have you finally received some closure?"

Honorio gazed in disgust at her deceased brother. There was a hole in her heart she could not easily fill by a simple act of vengeance. Thus, with a downcast expression, she spoke her concerns aloud.

"No, I fear as if this incident has only made me more spiteful..."

Berengar smiled as he heard this. He then grabbed ahold of Honorio's dainty chin and kissed her in front of her family, who were still filled with shock over the events that had just occurred. While standing over Decentius' body, he filled the girl's ears with advice on how to live her life in the future.

"Good... use what you are feeling right now to strike fear into the hearts of my enemies and create a world where a tragedy like this can never again befall our family!"

After saying this, Berengar gazed over at the Royal Families of Byzantium and Georgia who stared at the couple with fear in their eyes. They could not believe how calm the German Emperor and his bride were as they gazed upon the corpse of the man they had slain with utter contempt. Ultimately, the silence was broken when Berengar uttered the words.

"I suppose somebody should clean up this mess..."

It took them a few moments to respond, but ultimately, Vetrans steeled his resolve and called for the servants to clean up the corpse and prepare a proper funeral for the man. Despite everything Decentius had done, he was still a Palaiologos.

As for Honorio, Vetrans left her alone. He was in shock at what the monster his darling little girl had become, and was quite fearful of her, and especially her husband. The thought that Decentius was responsible for Arethas' death, and an assassination attempt on Honorio's life had never occurred to the man, and he now wondered if he even knew his family to begin with.

Before adjourning to his quarters for the night, Berengar made one last statement, which somewhat brought him back into the good graces of his hosts, despite everything that had just occurred.

"Rest in peace, Arethas. For we have avenged your untimely passing."