

# Steel 661

## Chapter 661 - The Gunther Merchant Company Part Two

A group of mercenaries sat on the deck of an Adela Class Armored Frigate while the banners of the German Empire swayed with the wind. Over a month had passed since Kaiser Berengar von Kufstein had given permission to the Gunther Merchant Company to form a Private Military Corporation, and the ability to establish a Colony in the New World.

The wealthy merchant had spared no time in securing the necessary people, ships, and equipment to begin colonization of an Island in the region known as the Caribbean in Berengar's past life. The Island in question was among the largest, if not the largest in the area, and in another world it was known by the name of Cuba.

Here in this world it was ripe for conquest and settlement, and because of this, various men had gathered under the contract of the Gunther Merchant Company to claim the island for themselves. At the head of the vessel was the eldest son of Gunther, whose name was Henrick.

Henrick was a tall, and robust man who had lived his early years as a lowly peasant. Now he was the son of a business mogul and had all the wealth he could ever ask for. Despite this, he desired to step foot on the foreign soil that the German Empire had discovered in secret. The reasoning was simple: the spirit of adventure lived on in his heart.

As with every young man in the Empire, Henrick had served his four years in one of the German Military branches. It was because of this that his father had tasked him with leading this band of mercenaries to establish an agricultural settlement so that the Gunther Merchant Company could grow sugarcane and coffee. Both of which were luxury items that the fatherland lacked the means to grow.

The retired soldiers who stood aboard the deck were armed with G22 Bolt Action Rifles and 1422 Service Revolvers. Rather than looking like some common rabble, these mercenaries wore distinctive uniforms that resembled those worn by the Austro-Hungarian Army during the later portion of the Great War from Berengar's past life.

Because they were entering the unknown, the company had purchased helmets and body armor previously only available to the Imperial Guard and issued them to the mercenaries. With 1916 style Stahlhelms on their heads, and concealable plate carriers over their torso, there was no weapon in the enemy's arsenal that they needed to fear. Or so they thought...

At the moment Henrick was gazing through his binoculars, searching for the first sight of land. He continued his search for some time before he noticed they were approaching the Island that Honoria's crew had charted in recent months. With this in mind, he quickly gave orders to the soldiers on deck.

"At the ready, men, we have almost arrived! I want the area secure the moment we touch the ground. Do not fire upon the natives unless they prove hostile. Though we come as conquerors, I would hope that we are able to take these lands with as little conflict as possible!"

The mercenaries nodded their heads in agreement. They did not want to risk their lives if it was necessary. They were here to do a job and get paid for it. If they did not have to fight, then they would

not do so. Soon, the ships pulled into the bay and dropped their anchors, where they let out the landing craft so that the German mercenaries could land on the soil of the unnamed island.

It was quite a sight to behold as five Armored Frigates and several Dominion class ocean liners sat in the bay, dropping their landing craft into the water, which contained dozens of soldiers on each boat. Naturally, such a large gathering of foreigners did not go unnoticed by the natives, who gazed upon the strange pale-skin men with curiosity.

It did not take long for the first rowboat to hit the shore, where Henrick stepped onto the sandy beach with his revolver in one hand and an infantry sword in the other. Though he wanted to avoid violence, he was well prepared to engage in it should such a thing be necessary. AL L NOVEL full.com

A group of locals gathered at the beach as they gazed upon the men dressed in strange uniforms, who were holding strange weapons. They did not know what to say about this situation. Henrick immediately stepped forward, surrounded by his soldiers, as he tried to make contact with the natives.

"We come from across the Atlantic Ocean. The German Empire now stakes its claim on this land!"

Naturally, the native Caribbeans did not have the slightest clue what the Germans were saying, and were surprised when a soldier came up with a flagpole and stuck it in the soil. The meaning of flags were completely lost to such a primitive tribal society, and they could not fathom the idea of these strangers coming to their homes and declaring themselves in charge.

Immediately, an elder of the nearest village came out and presented gifts to the foreign men. They were nothing more than primitive jewelry made of beads, but the gesture was enough to convince the Germans that these people weren't hostile. Upon seeing this, Henrick smiled and accepted the token of friendship before giving out a gift of his own. He reached into his rucksack and pulled out a ration of canned chicken, and handed it to the elderly woman.

The rations that these mercenaries were equipped with were some of the best products that the Gunther Merchant Company offered. Just earlier this afternoon, the crew of the vessel that Henrick dwelled on had dined upon a meal of buffalo chicken pasta. Which was made by the chefs on board using mostly canned and bottled foods.

The elder of the local tribe gazed upon the canned chicken with interest before opening its tab and revealing the pre-cooked poultry within. Upon smelling the substance, she dared to take a bite, and after tasting the juicy meat, a smile spread across her face before nodding her head in approval. She said some words in her native tongue to her people, and with that friendship had been established between the two foreign populations.

Of course, if the natives of the Island knew the Germans had come here for conquest and settlement, they likely would have resisted from the beginning. Unfortunately, they did not know this, and because of this lack of communication, they invited the German soldiers to stay with them.

Henrick was pleased that the locals proved to be friendly, and thus he took them up on their offer, using the beachhead and the nearby village as a staging point for the development of their settlement. He quickly got to work giving out orders for the establishment of a proper fortress for the German mercenaries to live in.

The German mercenaries did not hesitate to get to work. They were being paid to do a job, and many of the engineers and builders they had brought with them began establishing the first German settlement on the island. It was a primitive wooden fortress in the shape of a star fort. They did not have the stone, nor mortar to build anything complex like Berengar had done in Berenstadt.

It would take several days before the fortress was complete. In the meantime, Henrick would work on teaching the locals his language and learning theirs so that he could communicate effectively with them. It was a long and difficult process to learn a new language completely from scratch, especially if there was no direct translation of the new language you were learning.

However, following Berengar's example in the New World, Henrick quickly found a way to communicate by pointing to objects and saying the word in German, while learning the native word for it. He was more than happy to share the goods of his father's company with the locals. In doing so, he gave them a taste of the convenience the Empire had to offer.

The lead ship of the Gunther Merchant Company would use its radiotelegraph on board to communicate with the fatherland, informing them that they had landed on the large island and made contact with the natives. This one ship would remain in the bay while the others returned to the fatherland to ferry more men and supplies over to the new colony.

Gunther had gone spent a great expense to establish this colony, and he had no plans to give up on it now that it was finally being started. The man would frequently come into contact with Berengar and personally inform the Kaiser about the Settlement's development. For the time being, the German Empire had peaceful ties with another native group. Something that could not be said about the Settlement of New Swabia.

As for Berengar, he had more important matters to attend to at the moment and left the development of the newest colony completely up to Gunther. The fate of the natives were entirely in the hands of the Agricultural tycoon, and his young son.

#### Chapter 662 - Killing a Traitor

Itami Riyo held the hilt of her blade in her hand with a fierce grip. The Katana she wielded was made from tamahagane steel using modern smithing techniques to ensure that all the impurities were removed. A famous sword smith in the heartland of Japan, who was said to be a descendent of the legendary sword smith Masamune, had manufactured the sword specifically for her.

Though the albino beauty rarely engaged in combat due to the fact that she was a woman, and was naturally weaker than the male warriors she fought against, she currently used all the skills she had as she slashed at the unarmored waist of an enemy soldier. The fine steel blade of her Katana cut diagonally into the man's unarmored torso, revealing his rib cage as it effortlessly cut through his heart.

The Army, loyal to the newfound Itami Shogunate, had bombarded the city of Naniwa for three days and three nights and on the fourth day, the traitor known as Shimazu Takatame revealed himself. The moment he did so a bloody battle ensued, where Riyo was now caught in the middle of.

Initially, the battle had begun with the exchange of matchlock fire. Resulting in large casualties on the Shimazu Clan's side. Though her enemies had matchlocks, they did not know the proper tactics to use them. Inspired by her time in Westpoint, Itami Riyo made use of line tactics to effectively gun down her

enemy. Eventually, the woman ran out of patience and charged into the fray with her blade in hand as she led her warriors to the front where she and her elite samurai now clashed with the rebels.

An oncoming spear thrust itself towards the young woman. However, it merely glanced off of her tosei gusoku before she cut the man's neck with her blade. The man collapsed to the floor as he struggled to stop the bleeding, but it was no use. He was already a dead man. Upon seeing another one of his retainers fall to the blade of the albino woman, Shimazu Takatame called out to her in an attempt to enrage the young woman who now claimed to be Shogun of Japan.

"You bitch! If you had just agreed to my proposal, none of this would be happening! I will forgive you if you surrender and present yourself to me!"

Riyo's only response was to snarl like a beast as she cut away at a nearby ashigaru who put up the best fight possible against the female warlord, however in the end he was driven back, and stabbed through the gut. There were only a few men between her and her target, and Riyo intended to claim the rebel's head.

Working alongside her greatest warriors, the front line protecting the rebel general began to collapse, as the Samurai used their yari and katana to slaughter the enemy. A sense of overwhelming dread began to take hold of Takatame's heart as he gazed upon the woman he loved so mercilessly cut down his soldiers.

He could not believe she had marched so swiftly just to claim his life. After all, there were plenty of other rebels she had to worry about. Why was he the target of her fury? This woman seriously never knew when to quit. Such tenacity was unladylike. He now questioned what he had ever seen in such a ferocious woman. However, Riyo did not care about his opinions, instead she howled like a banshee as she called out the traitor's name.

"Takatame-san, I am coming for you!"

This response sent chills down the man's spine, however what was more terrifying was after saying this, she cut down another man who was in between her and her target. In doing so, she had positioned herself in a perfect position to strike. The rebel general panicked and quickly withdrew his blade from its saya. He could not help but feel defeated as he gazed into the blood-red eyes of the beautiful woman who sought to kill him.

"It didn't have to be this way, Itami-sama!"

However, the woman was not in the mood to talk and quickly slashed at the man, who was once one of her closest advisors. As if she could see nothing but red, the woman charged at the man in a Berzerker frenzy, forcing him on the back step. Though her skill in the blade was exceptional, her speed and strength were lacking relative to a man. It was because of this that the traitor could quickly regain his composure and drove Riyo back into her own lines.

This only made Riyo more furious as she counterattacked by withdrawing her wakizashi and fighting with two blades against her opponent. Each strike was perfectly positioned, as if it were going to tear the man's limbs off. Slowly but surely, cuts began to accumulate in the less armored areas of her opponent's body. With every drop of blood spilled, the man became more feeble.

In an act of desperation, Takatame slashed at the woman's hand, and though it did not get through her thick armor, it knocked her wakizashi away from her, forcing Riyo to fight with only her Katana once more. Despite his best efforts, Takatame could not rally forth his soldiers to defend him as they were too busy dealing with the samurai beneath Riyo's command. With a smug smirk on her face, the young Shogun taunted her prey.

"What's the matter Takatame-san? You can't handle a woman in single combat? You truly are pathetic. Maybe if you spent more time focusing on the sword, instead of on your concubines, you might have stood a chance against me. You are half the man your father was, and not even close to being worthy of me!"

Such an insult to the man's honor was unforgiveable. Despite the massive wounds that had accumulated all over his body, he charged forth with all his strength in an attempt to end Riyo's life with one swift decapitating blow.

However, the sly woman knew exactly what he was planning and evaded his strike while bringing her blade through the unarmored portion of the man's waist. For a second it appeared as if he was unharmed, that is, until he stumbled and fell to his knees, his guts spilling all over the floor.

By now Riyo knew she had won, and she regained her composure as she stared coldly at the man who had started a rebellion because he was rejected. A single phrase escaped her pretty lips as she brought the sword down on the man's neck.

"Not even worth your weight in piss!"

Those were the last words that Shimazu Takatame heard as his head was severed from his neck. Having slain her enemy, Itami Riyo slashed her blade into the air, splashing the blood that slaked her blade onto the ground below. Having done this, she sheathed her sword and stood back as the soldiers beneath the fallen traitor's command crumbled without their leader. The woman grabbed hold of the severed head that belonged to the Rebel General and held it high in the air as she made her declaration of victory.

"The traitor is dead! Long live the Itami Shogunate!"

Those who still resisted quickly dropped their weapons as they realized their leader had been slain. Without the support of a major daimyo, they were mere ronin at best, or simple peasants forced to wield the spear at the worst. Many of the samurai who belonged to Takatame's faction wanted to commit seppuku at that moment. That is, until Riyo raised her voice once more.

"Many of you have fought alongside me before, and though you betrayed me because of your master, he is now dead, and yet I am still here. Swear your loyalty to me, the new Shogun, and I will spare your lives. In fact, I will reward you for your loyalty as you fight for me against my many enemies!"

Nobody here can say that I am a poor ruler. Your master raised his sword in rebellion because I rejected his marriage proposal. He was weak, and the fact that he lost to me in single combat proves this! Join me, and together we will create a new empire, one that is unrivaled in this world!" [ALLNOVEL.com](http://ALLNOVEL.com)

Though her words were harsh, there was hope in them, and this hope inspired those who had previously lifted their swords in rebellion to kneel before the woman and swear their loyalty to her. After all, she

had led her forces to squash the Ashikaga Shogunate, and now crushed the Shimazu clan. It was only now they realized the height of their folly.

With this victory, Itami Riyo would incorporate what remained of the Shimazu Clan into her domain. She would use them as the shock troops in her war against the other rebels. Her plan was simple: crush the rebellion, establish absolute authority, and then invade Hokkaido. However, she had only made one small step towards this destiny, and for the time being, she still had many enemies to face.

#### Chapter 663 - Time Flies By

While Itami Riyo engaged in a campaign to destroy those who rebelled against her newfound power, Berengar was focused on the development of his Empire. The first Hydroelectric dam was being constructed, which would soon provide electricity to the city of Kufstein. As for the rest of the Empire, it was rapidly modernizing in its industrial and agricultural capacities.

By now, animal power had largely been replaced on farms with steam powered tractors, and the cities were under reconstruction to allow for modern amenities like plumbing and other major conveniences. There were even magnificent statues made in the form of German heroes that had existed as cultural attractions. Soon, all the German cities would be as advanced as its capital.

Before he knew it, months had passed, and Berengar received a report on his desk about the ongoing crusades. After achieving initial success in Acre, the Crusader armies had landed tens of thousands of more troops and targeted other major locations within the Holy Land. Surprised by the power that the Catholic Kingdoms possessed, the Timurid and Byzantine Empires launched a counterattack.

At the moment, the war was in a stalemate, with a series of protracted sieges taking place across the Holy Land. Despite this, Emperor Vetrans did not officially request support from his allies. Instead, he maintained trade with the German Empire to ensure that his soldiers were equipped with the best weapons and armor that money could buy.

Initially he would have faced resistance from the opposing factions in his court, but the threat of the crusades was too much to bear, and thus for the first time in a long time the doves, hawks, and neutral powers united to buy the weapons and training they needed to defeat their enemy.

The idea was to hold their ground for as long as possible, and then dispatch several advanced armies to wipe out the Crusader forces. The Timurid Empire, on the other hand, had also opened up trade with the German Empire, realizing that its forces were obsolete compared to the Crusaders and their Byzantine allies. They were desperate for as many firearms, cannons, and munitions that they could gain.

The new year was approaching, and Berengar's wives and his mistress had all given birth to healthy children. Currently they were recuperating, and because of this, Hemma had taken over temporarily as the acting head of Imperial Intelligence. This left Berengar in a state of reprieve from his wives' drama, but also a sense of irritation, as he no longer had anyone to play with in his spare time.

During this time, the Gunther Merchant Company had established a colony named Bäckerhafen. Bäcker being Gunther's surname. The colony got along well with the natives, achieving another peaceful relationship with the local population, and had incorporated them as a means of cheap labor. Because

the natives of the island did not understand modern currency, they had been given food and superior living conditions in exchange for their labor. Much like the practice Arnulf had started in New Vienna.

As for the Colony of New Swabia, Emmerich continued to wage war with the locals in a brutal campaign to establish German domination over the region. Eventually, the Locals had enough of their destruction and sued for peace. Under the direction of Berengar, a local refuge was established for the various tribes in the region currently known as the Adelheim Mountains, and acted as a reservation for the surviving native populace. Meanwhile, Emmerich conquered the surrounding regions and incorporated them into his territory of New Swabia.

In the Settlement of Berenstadt, the colony had thrived and expanded into several smaller coastal settlements. As per the agreements with the Aztec Empire, Berengar could establish several colonies across the coastline of the region once known as Mesoamerica. The German empire's colonies had expanded and influenced the local populations.

Though the Aztecs had lost many of their more savage cultural practices, their German suzerains, who commonly traded with the local empire and interacted with the locals, had influenced them in many aspects. German soldiers stationed in the nearby colonies were especially popular among the Aztec woman as they had a close physical resemblance to one of their most important deities.

Berengar had to respond to this by reminding his soldiers that the natives of the new world may have STDs, and that any man who contracted one would remain in the colony indefinitely, unable to return to the fatherland and spread the diseases they had gained during deployment. Despite his warning, several of his soldiers fell prey to syphilis, and because of Berengar's actions, he successfully prevented it from returning to Germany.

Currently, Berengar was relaxing in his office after a hard day's work. In his hands was a report from his chemistry department. Aldo von Passau had discovered the means to create smokeless powder via experimentation with cellulose, which he got via the massive surplus of Hemp that Berengar's farms grew.

In this letter, the man went to great lengths to describe the chemical process to create smokeless powder, and had experimented so much he was able to create a double-base powdered formed by mixing nitroglycerine and nitrocellulose. Nitrocellulose was created via a mixture of nitric acid, sulfuric acid and cellulose and was a key component in the formation of gunpowder.

Berengar's interests weren't in chemistry, but the practical aspects of smokeless powder. With this report, he now had the means to create more advanced firearms and artillery. Though it would be some time before he could produce such weapons in large numbers, this meant that he would soon have repeating firearms in his army, and proper machine guns.

However, he did not immediately get to work on designing the new weapons, as there was no point until he had enough smokeless powder to supply them. Instead, he approved the spending of whatever resources Aldo von Passau and his team of chemists needed to mass produce the material.

Berengar estimated that by the time he finally defeated the Catholic Church, which he knew would occur directly after their crusade to the holy land was over, regardless as to whether or not they won. That he would have enough smokeless powder stockpiled to begin producing more modern weapons.

Thus, he took a swig of a drink to celebrate, as a knock resounded on his door. His brow raised in curiosity as he heard this sound and answered it with an affectionate tone in his voice.

"It's open..."

The door opened slightly to reveal the appearance of Yasmin who had a troubled expression on her face. When Berengar saw this, he immediately sat up straight and took a more serious approach to the conversation that was about to take place.

Yasmin handed a letter over to her husband, which contained the details that were causing her so much distress. She sat down and sighed heavily as she grabbed hold of Berengar's chalice and took a sip from it without his permission.

Berengar read the letter, and he too became sighed heavily in defeat before expressing his thoughts on the matter.

"Is your brother an idiot?"

The Princess of Al-Andalus wore a bitter smile as she nodded to her husband.

"What do you think?"

Berengar snatched his drink away from his wife and took a big gulp before quickly refilling the chalice. He could not believe the man was behaving so foolishly. He struggled to find the words to properly scold the absent man. Ultimately, it was Yasmin who spoke up on his behalf.

"What the hell is he thinking? He has finally unified Iberia under his rule, and he thinks now is the perfect time to invade Morrocco? He does realize that there are protests all across his newfound Sultanate right? If he mobilizes his forces into North Africa, the christians beneath his rule will revolt, and he will lose much of the ground he has gained thanks to your help."

According to the letter, Hasan had gotten into a petty squabble with the Ruler of Morrocco and decided to declare war against him. Why? Because he knew he would win the conflict thanks to the superior army he had. Of course, he failed to consider the internal strife that would occur the moment he moved his troops out of the cities and into another continent. Berengar wore a bitter expression as he made a joke at Yasmin's expense.

"I'm starting to regret marrying you..."

The woman giggled when she heard this, knowing that her husband wasn't serious, it was because of this she decided to play along and hear his reasoning.

"Oh? Why is that?"

Berengar sighed once more while he revealed the thoughts on his mind.

"I realize now that I'm going to be cleaning up your brother's messes for the rest of my life..."

Yasmin could hardly contain her herself and ended up breaking into a fit of laughter. Did Berengar not realize how foolish her brother was when he married her? It was amusing that he was only realizing this now. However, Berengar had more important concerns on his mind.



"Well, it's too late now to stop your brother. I must contact Adelbrand as soon as possible, the man has been in Iberia too long, it is time for him to return to the Fatherland, I will allow him to choose a replacement who will be in charge of maintaining the peace in Iberia while your brother marches into Morrocco like a fool."

Yasmin was entertained by Berengar's response as she raised her brow in curiosity before asking the question on her mind.

"You're still going to help him?"

In response to this, Berengar merely chuckled before replying to his wife's question.

"Of course, I can't let Iberia collapse after all the blood, sweat and tears I have poured into it over the years. It appears once more German troops will be involved in Iberia..."

A pretty smile formed on Yasmin's lips as she leaned over and kissed her husband before whispering in his ear.

"Thank you for helping my idiot of a little brother... I will properly repay you later when I am feeling better..."

Berengar smiled and spoke a simple phrase when he heard this remark.

"I look forward to it..."

With that said, Berengar had once more invested a large amount of German Forces into Iberia. The measly peacekeeping forces he had sent were not enough to maintain the Al-Fadl dynasty's control over the region.

#### Chapter 664 - A New Generation of Army Equipment

With the invention of Smokeless powder, Berengar now had the opportunity to create new weapons, and though these weapons could not be mass produced for many months, the earlier he designed them, and tested them, the better it was.

These were no mere single shot firearms. There were many components that went into a repeating firearm, and each part had to be thoroughly tested in order for the weapon to be deemed serviceable. It wasn't a simple matter of drawing up blueprints and putting them into action like he had done in the past. Weapons like these took time to reach perfection.

The first thing Berengar needed to do was design new cartridges for use in service, and immediately, two designs came to mind. The 7.92x57mm Mauser cartridge would be used for future rifles and machine guns. This cartridge was more commonly referred to as the 8mm Mauser in his past life. Since the Mauser brothers weren't around in this time to develop the cartridge, Berengar had simply referred to it as the 7.92x57mm Gewehr Cartridge.

The 7.92x57mm cartridge used a 7.92mm Spitzer shaped bullet, with a 57mm rimless bottleneck brass case that used a double base smokeless powder. For his newest caliber, Berengar intended to use simple copper jacketed lead projectiles.

Among the myriad of new chemical advancements coming out of the Kufstein Chemistry Department every year, was the invention of lead styphnate which is used to make superior, non-corrosive primers. Because of this, Berengar designed these new cartridges to use new and improved primers.

As for the second ammunition, it was designed with pistols in mind, and later, when he finally got around to it, sub-machine guns. For now, such weapons would simply be overkill, and he wanted to ensure his soldiers were first equipped with the new rifles. This cartridge continued to see us well into the time of Julian's death, and because of this, he was extremely familiar with reloading it.

The 9x19mm Parabellum was the most common pistol cartridge of Berengar's past life and had seen service since before the great war. It was a simple 9mm copper jacketed, lead projectile with a 19mm rimless tapered case. Such a round was powerful enough to put down humans, and with +p hollow-point ammunition could easily stop someone who was hopped up on drugs. It was also lightweight and had minimal recoil.

The first weapon Berengar designed was the replacement for the current issue Single Shot, black powder, bolt-action rifle referred to as the g22 in this timeline. It was once known as the Mauser 1871 in Berengar's past life, and was the primary weapon of the Imperial German Army until it was replaced by the Gewehr 1888. This rifle would continue to serve in Berengar's army for another year, at least. Though, eventually, it would be replaced by the rifle, Berengar had in mind.

The Basis for the new Gewehr 25, or G25 for short, was the Gewehr 1898 from Berengar's past life. More specifically, the G98m, which was a variant that was retrofitted during the Spanish Civil War by German factories and provided to the nationalists as a form of military aid. It also saw limited service in the ranks of the Waffen-SS and the Volkssturm during WWII.

The biggest difference between the G98 and the G98m was the improved iron sights, which resemble those used on the k98k. There were also some other minor changes, but they were hardly noticeable at first glance.

The G98m was fed by five round stripper clips into an internal magazine. It used a robust three lug bolt design that could easily handle the pressures of the 8mm cartridge and was considered by many in Berengar's past life as the pinnacle of bolt action design.

The major difference between Berengar's G25 and the G98m was the inclusion of an Arisaka style dust cover, which prevented dirt, mud, and debris from entering the action. This would be especially useful in trench warfare, which Berengar planned to widely use until a time where he could mechanize his army.

The bayonet designed for the rifle was based on the seitengewehr 98/05 which was used by German Troops in the Great War of Berengar's past life. It was a long, hefty blade style bayonet which was commonly referred to as the "butcher blade" because of its size and appearance.

Aside from the G25 Infantry Rifle, Berengar decided to replace the old 1422 Service Revolver with a new semi-automatic pistol. Semi-automatic fire could only be reliably used with smokeless powder, which was the reason he had not implemented such weapons until this point. All NOVEL full.com

The pistol Berengar had in mind was none other than the Luger P08. Why the Luger when there were other, better, later designs he could pick from? The reason for this was the simple fact that there was no pistol more iconically German than the Luger.

It was true that the Luger used an outdated and absurdly expensive to manufacture toggle-lock design to function. However, it was reliable, and in Berengar's honest opinion, it looked cool. The Luger was one of his favorite guns, and though he knew how they functioned, he had never been able to obtain one in his past life. The Luger fed from an 8 round detachable magazine, and was iconic as the primary German sidearm in WWII movies, despite the Walther P38 being more prominent in actual history.

Aside from these weapons, Berengar designed another weapon to be used by his infantry. The MG25, as it would become known in this life, was based upon the Vickers Machine Gun used by British Forces in both World Wars.

The Vickers was nothing more than an improved Maxim Machine gun, which was used by practically every major army in the Great War, including that of the German Empire. It was a watercooled, belt fed machine gun of substantial reliability and durability. The only problem this weapon had was its weight. It could not be easily moved and had to be operated by a crew of men. This was not a concern to Berengar, as he intended for these machine guns to be used in static positions.

The reason the Vickers were an improvement over the Maxim was because the action of the gun was flipped upside down, allowing it to be smaller and lighter weight. Aside from this, it functioned almost exactly the same as a standard Maxim that the Germans and Russians used.

In history, this weapon was serviced with a cloth belt that held the ammunition. This was the biggest weakness of the Vickers as when it got wed, or coated with filth, it caused reliability issues. The Russians would later develop a metallic belt for their Maxim M1910s, and Berengar intended to use a similar feeding system.

The last major weapon system that Berengar designed to replace his current weaponry was a set of new artillery pieces modelled after the 7.5cm FK 16 nA which was used by the Germans in WWII. This Artillery piece was essentially an improvement on the WWI era 7.7 cm FK 16. It utilized a 75mm High Explosive shell which Berengar's forces currently used, and was equipped with a superior Hydro-Pneumatic recoil system.

Berengar's current field guns had no recoil mechanism. Because of this, every time they were fired, the artillery crew would have to reset the guns. With the Hydro-pneumatic recoil system, the gun would maintain its position much better after being fired, allowing for quicker follow up shots. Aside from this, it still operated with a horizontal sliding block mechanism.

Berengar also designed a scaled-up version of this gun in 10cm, which utilized a 105 x 504 mmR separate-loading, cased charge. He would refer to both of these artillery pieces as the 7.5cm FK 25, and the 10cm K 25 field guns.

Aside from these weapons, Berengar also designed new uniforms for his soldiers based on those used by the Germans during the latter portion of the Great War of his past life. With all of these innovations, his Army would be on a technological level of Germany during WWI, and he would not need to innovate with new weapons for the foreseeable future.

Or so he thought. After all, Berengar had no idea that a new rival was appearing in the far east, and if he did not stay ahead of the game, he might soon fall behind. Because of this, Berengar sat back with a nice

cold beer, and finalized his blueprints before sending them to the Kufstein Royal Armory to begin testing. It would be a long time before these weapons would enter service.

After finishing his work for the day, a knock resounded on his door and before he could even respond, it opened to reveal Honoria. She had recently given birth to a second child, a younger sister to the boy Alexandros. Berengar had named the girl Helena, and Honoria was unusually spry despite being in recovery.

She had a smile on her face as she shoved a map onto Berengar's desk, which revealed a new discovery her crew had made during her absence. Having received full funding from the German Empire, the crew of explorers and privateers went around the world looking for the fatherland to colonize.

They had been the first westerners to sail to the bottom of Africa, where they discovered a land rich in resources that was ripe for the taking. With an emphatic smile on her face, Honoria posed a question to her husband.

"What do you think about colonizing Southern Africa?"

#### Chapter 665 - Family Drama Part One

Berengar stared at the map on the table that his third wife Honoria had presented to him. It was a rough chart of the coastline that belonged to the region known as South Africa during his previous life. While he had given Honoria and her crew permission to sail across the world and explore unknown regions, he had no idea that they had made their way to the southernmost end of Africa.

Having already established a series of colonies across the Americas, the time was ripe to begin the Colonization of a new continent. After all, Africa was a land of vast resources, and during this time, the southernmost tip was sparsely populated.

A wicked smile curved itself upon Berengar's lips as he gazed towards yet another region rich in gold. He was extremely excited at the prospect of conquering the land and making its riches his own.

"Very well, I will organize an expedition so that we may explore the region, and claim it for ourselves. After all, things are certainly progressing smoothly in the New World. It is time to stake our claim elsewhere."

Honoria nodded, with a pretty smile on her face. She was happy to see that her husband had the same mindset as she did. After a few moments, she inquired further about the expedition that Berengar had in mind.

"How many troops shall we bring? How many vessels? How long will we stay there? Do you think we will see anything interesting?"

Berengar waited for the woman to calm down before he explained his plans for this major expedition.

"I think a single brigade should be enough to compel any locals to kneel before our might. As for vessels, a small fleet of five warships and ten cargo vessels will suffice. I hear our Shipyards in the Mediterranean are producing a fine number of the new dominion class vessels, however for a venture of this size, we will still have to rely on some of the old clippers."

Honorina nodded her head upon hearing the massive size of the expedition. As for Berengar, he did not plan to set out for at least another two months. To him, there were important things that needed to be done in the Fatherland. Another venture so soon after his newest batch of children was born was not the best idea. Thus he conveyed these thoughts as Honorina was getting way too excited for her own good.

"We will not depart for another two months or so. After all, you still need to recuperate from childbirth, and I have many matters I must attend to. So be patient. The time will come for us to set sail soon enough."

Such a lackluster response caused the young woman to pout like a child, but ultimately she accepted it. Though her crew of privateers was enough to explore unknown regions, it was not enough to conquer or settle them. Because of this, she could not act rashly without the support of the German Crown.

"Fine..."

Berengar immediately noticed that this result had displeased his wife. In response, he scolded the woman for the lack of care she had shown to her offspring.

"You should spend some time with Alexandros and Helena. You are a mother, and yet you have left the raising of your son up to Linde until now. Perhaps you should spend some quality time with the boy and your newborn daughter."

Such a response shocked Honorina, as she had never really thought about her lack of presence in her son's life. She had always been on one adventure or another since she first gave birth to the boy, much like her husband. It was true that she left the majority of her son's care up to Linde. Upon thinking about this, she nodded her head and took Berengar's suggestion to heart.

'I will do that then..."

After saying this, Honorina left Berengar to continue his work, and travelled around the palace looking for her young son. When she finally found him, she noticed Alexandros was playing with his half brother Kristoffer, who was roughly the same age as him.

She quietly observed the two boys who were spending their free time playing as soldiers around the house. She thought it was extremely cute that her son was dressed in a little German Army uniform while wielding toy guns that mimicked their real steel counterparts. Alexandros pointed his toy revolver towards his brother and called out to the boy after pretending to fire a shot.

"Bang! I got you Kris!"

The blonde-haired child immediately fell to the floor while playing dead. Meanwhile, Alexandros blew the imaginary smoke out of his toy revolver while cursing the imaginary enemy.

"Filthy barbarian!"

Despite being the son of Princess Honorina and a member of the Palaiologos Dynasty, the boy played the part of a German Soldier, fighting against a "barbarian" which took the form of a Catholic Knight. After playing dead for a while and allowing Alexandros to have his victory scene, Kristoffer rose from his position with a look of envy in his eyes.

"No fair Alex! You have been playing as Germany all day, it is my turn!"

Despite Kristoffer's protests, Alexandros did not change his mind. Instead, he argued with his half-brother about who should play as the Germans.

"These are the rules. I get to be the German, and you get to be the barbarian!"

Such an outlandish remark deeply upset Kristoffer, whose cheeks were now red with fury. While curling his fists, the boy called out to his brother and insulted his heritage to his face.

"That's not fair! Both of my parents are German, but you're a half-breed! If anyone should be the barbarian, it is you!"

Clearly Kristoffer knew how to get on Alexandros' nerves, because the boy immediately dropped the toy gun and charged at his brother with his fists raised. Neither of the two boys had properly learned how to fight, yet aside from wrestling with their older brother. Because of this, it turned into a comical fight as both sides basically grabbed onto each other and rolled around on the ground. Alexandros was screaming the entire time.

"Take it back! Take it back! I am not a half-breed!"

Honorias heart nearly broke when she saw her son being picked on for being half Roman. She immediately broke the two apart and tried to settle their differences. While lecturing Kristoffer for his errant words.

"Alexandros, Kristoffer, you are brothers! You shouldn't be fighting like this! Kristoffer, it is not polite to refer to your brother as a half-breed. Apologize immediately!"

However, Kristoffer refused to relent on this issue and immediately fired back at Honorias.

"Shut up! You're not my mom! So what if I call him a half-breed? It's true, isn't it?"

This statement took Honorias by surprise. She clutched her wounded heart as she heard the boy insist she was not his mother. Though Kristoffer was not her biological child, she had always treated Berengar's other children as her own, so why was the boy being so vicious to her? Meanwhile, Alexandros was still trying to claw his way towards his brother with a fierce glare in his eyes.

"Screw you! I'm not halfbreed! I'm a proud German!"

The fact that her own son would reject his Roman heritage added further insult to injury as Honorias fell into a state of depression. Had she really neglected her son so much that he wanted nothing to do with her family line?

Ultimately, the commotion between the two boys caught the interest of Berengar's other wives, with Adela and Linde arriving at the scene with shocked expressions. Adela glared at the scuffed appearance of the two boys and immediately inquired about what had transpired.

"What's going on here? Why are they like this?"

Honorio struggled to hold back the tears in her eyes as she attempted to explain the situation to her husband's other wives.

"They got into a fight because Kristoffer called Alexandros a half-breed."

This caused a state of confusion in Adela's mind, as she did not understand why that would cause Honorio's son to behave so violently. It was the truth, after all. However, Linde had a rough idea of what was going on in Alexandros' head.

The truth was that Linde had always been the maternal figure for Alexandros, going so far as to call him her "precious baby boy" like she did all of Berengar's sons. In fact, Honorio had seldom been a part of her son's life, and had left every part of his raising up to Linde.

Honorio only really showed up in the boy's life occasionally when she was returning from an adventure. When she did, she usually came bearing presents, but then would immediately spend as much time as possible with her husband. Because of this, the moment Linde entered the scene, Alexandros ran towards her, and hugged her tightly while sobbing.

"Mommy, Kristoffer is being mean to me! He called me a half-breed!"

Upon seeing such a thing, Honorio's heart nearly shattered. Even though she had been the one to separate the boys, her own son did not make a single attempt to confide in her, and instead called another woman "mommy" while crying in her bosom. Linde had a perplexed expression on her face as she tried to comfort the boy and hand him off to his biological mother.

"Alexandros, you know I love you as if you were one of my own sons, but you should be with your actual mother right now. You know Honorio is the one who brought you into this world, right?"

Alexandros stared at Linde in disbelief before setting his gaze on Honorio, who looked like she was about to cry. It was true that he and that woman shared the same hair and eye color, but he had never thought of her as a mother, more like an aunt who visited on occasion. To find out that Honorio was his actual mother shattered the boy's entire perspective. At his age, Alexandros was too immature to accept the truth, and instead further dug his head into Linde's bosom and denied reality.

"No! Linde is my mommy!"

Upon hearing this, Honorio could no longer hold back the tears in her eyes, and cried profusely. She could not stand the sight of her own son calling another woman "mommy" and fled from the scene in haste. Linde tried to call out to the woman, but it was no use. She was already gone.

"Honorio, wait!"

Ultimately, Linde was left to look after Alexandros and patch things up between him and his brother. Honorio, on the other hand, ran off to the Palace Gardens, where she wept like a child. The only one to keep her company was her oldest friend, Heraclius, who had flown by her side when he realized something was wrong.

Chapter 666 - Family Drama Part Two

Berengar was hard at work signing away documents when a knock resounded on his door. He was slightly perturbed when he heard this and immediately rejected the idea of entertaining someone.

"Not now... I'm busy!"

However, the voice that called out to him belonged to his wife Linde, and because of this, he immediately shifted his attitude, especially when he heard the concern in the woman's voice.

"Berengar, I'd hate to bother you when you're busy, but this is pretty important. Do you mind opening up?"

In response to this, Berengar sighed before getting up from his seat and walking towards the door. When he opened it, he was surprised to see that his wife was holding a crying child in her arms. Perplexed by such a strange scene, Berengar grabbed hold of the boy and tried to calm him, all while inquiring with Linde as to what had transpired.

"What happened? Why is he like this?"

The boy did not stop crying, and instead filled Berengar's tunic with his tears. Linde sighed heavily as she explained what had just happened moments ago between his two sons.

"Apparently, he got into a fight with your son, Kristoffer, who called him a half-breed. Alexandros appears to be under the delusion that I am his biological mother."

In between his sobs, Alexandros muttered some words which Berengar could barely hear.

"It's not true! I'm not a half-breed!"

Just when he was about to scold his son for his actions, Linde revealed another interesting piece of information.

"Berengar, he made his mother cry. I'm going to go search for Honoria and try to comfort her, you should tell your son the truth."

Such news caused Berengar to be slightly infuriated as he nodded his head in silence, signalling the redheaded beauty that she could leave. Once he was alone with his son, Berengar glared at the boy and spoke to him in a stern tone.

"Just what did you do to make your mother cry?"

Such overwhelming authority immediately caused the boy to stop his crying and gaze at his father with a defiant expression.

"She's not my mother! Linde is my mommy!"

Upon hearing this response, Berengar had the urge to slap the boy, instead he took a moment to calm down with a deep breath before revealing the truth to the boy.

"Of course, Linde is your mommy, just like Adela, Yasmin, and Henrietta are, as well. However, you know Honoria is your actual mother, right? You are blessed with five mommies, each of them cares for you as their own child. However, Honoria is the one who brought you into this world. You need to apologize to your mother and make this right."

Alexandros gazed up at his father with a perplexed expression. He could barely comprehend what his father was telling him.



"If Honoria is my mother, then why has Linde raised me?"

Berengar sighed in response to this, before reaching into his ice chest and grabbing out a pitcher of milk, which he poured a glass for the two of them. After doing so, he handed one cup to his son, while drinking from his own. It was only after he and Alexandros had become more comfortable did Berengar tell his story.

"You can't blame your mother for being absent in your life. It's actually my fault. You see, when your mother was a young girl, she was held captive by her family, never being allowed to leave the palace. She escaped from that life at a young age and made a perilous journey here to Kufstein.

I looked after your mother for some time, and eventually the two of us fell in love. She made me promise I would grant her freedom so that she could explore the world that her parents kept her hidden from. Since that day I have done my best to keep that promise, however it has been at your expense.

The moment she had you, I should have put my foot down and forced her to raise you as a responsible mother. However, Linde was more than happy to take over that role for Honoria, and because of that I felt at ease, ignoring the consequences such a thing would have on you. After all, I wasn't there for you or your siblings like I should have been.

However, that's going to change now. As you know, I have been taking weekends off to spend time with you and your siblings. I am trying my best to be a part of your lives, it just appears that your mother has yet to realize how important family is. She's still acting like that little girl who wanted to escape from the cage her parents forced her into."

Alexandros was too young to properly understand everything Berengar was telling him, but he understood the gist of it. Thus, with tears forming in his eyes asked the father the question most important to him.

"So, I'm a half-breed?"

Berengar chuckled as he wiped the tears from his son's eyes before filling the boy's head with the vision he had for him.

"That's right, you're the best of both worlds, half-german and half-roman. You know, a long time ago it was my people who were the barbarians, while the romans gazed upon us from their grand civilization with a hint of disdain in their eyes. Alexandros, you are very important, more than you realize.

I will not lie to you, you will have many brothers, Alexandros. Currently you have Hans, and the newborn Brandt whose mother is Linde. While I have two sons with Adela as well, Kristofer, and the infant Franz. My sons who come from Linde, and Adela's bloodlines will one day fight to succeed me. Only one will be crowned the German Emperor.

However, you are destined to be the Emperor of Byzantium, a civilization with its roots in the Ancient Roman Empire. You will have a very important role to play, and that is to work alongside your brothers and maintain the balance of power in this world.

You are my son Alexandros, and because of that, I will make you an emperor. Your mother is a Princess of Rome, and don't you forget it. So hold your head high and embrace your heritage. While you're at it,

try to get along with your mother. Though she may not show it often, she cares for you deeply, and your words hurt her."

The tears in Alexandros' eyes had long since vanished, and instead were replaced with fascination over the idea of being a Roman Emperor. In truth, the current Byzantine Empire was a far cry from their ancestors and was more Greek than Roman. Despite this, they still claimed to be the successors of Rome, and that was good enough for Berengar.

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While Berengar was comforting his son, Linde was searching for Honoria, who was crying in the Palace Gardens. With a smug smile on her face, the redheaded beauty announced her presence.

"I thought I would find you here... Honoria, talk to me..."

The byzantine princess had tears flowing from her mint green eyes as she gazed upon the intruder with a hint of envy on her pretty face.

"He called you mommy. Do you have any idea how it feels to have your own son reject you?"

Linde sighed heavily as she sat down next to Honoria and hugged the young woman fiercely. Though Honoria didn't want to hear it, Linde felt she needed a good kick in the pants to change her carefree attitude.

"Well Honoria, I don't mean to stick my nose in your business, but who do you think raised the boy until now? You have been gallivanting across the high seas in search of adventure. All this time I have been here raising your son. Is it really a surprise that he sees me as his primary maternal figure?"

Honoria bit down on her lip in displeasure upon hearing this word. She was so confused about what she should do to repair the strained relationship she had with her son.

"Linde, what do I do? How do I win back my son's love?"

A wry smile appeared on Linde's face as she gave the woman next to her some much needed advice.

"Why don't you sit out on this upcoming expedition to Africa and stay here with your children? You have such a lovely son. It is truly a shame you don't spend any time with the boy."

Honoria was shocked to hear that Linde had learned about her plans so soon, and immediately questioned just where the woman got such information.

"How-"

Before she could finish her sentence, Linde looked at her with a condescending expression before mocking the woman.

"Hello, Director of Imperial Intelligence, there's nothing I don't know that goes on around here!"

Honoria did not know how to counter such words. After all, it had only been an hour at most since she had informed Berengar of her intentions. Naturally, Linde was aware of the journey Honoria's crew had taken and where they went. Not only that, but she saw the map on Berengar's desk when she delivered

Alexandros to him. She decided to reveal this last bit of information in an attempt to cheer up the crying beauty by her side.

"Actually, I just found out about it when I went to deliver your son to his father. I saw the map on his desk and could quickly conclude about what your plans were."

Such a simple admission made Honoria giggle. She did not know why. When Linde saw this, she stroke the girl's hair before complimenting her.

"You look much more beautiful when you smile..."

Honoria did not know why, but she soon found her face dragging closer to Linde's lips like a tractor beam had set on her. Eventually, the two women kissed passionately in the middle of the Palace Gardens. Heraclius was the only witness to this, and immediately rolled his eyes before taking off, returning to his quarters, where his own family awaited him. It would appear he was worried about nothing.

After the intimate moment between the two women was over, Linde grabbed hold of Honoria's hand and led her back to the palace.

"Come, it is time you act like a proper mother to your son!"

Linde did not wait for a response and instead dragged Honoria alongside with her. She was determined to repair the bond between mother and son.

### **Chapter 667 - Next-Generation Naval Vessels**

Berengar sighed heavily as he brought his young son Alexandros towards his mother. The woman's eyes were red and puffy. Evidently, she had been crying for some time because of the boy's actions. However, after a thorough scolding, Alexandros was ready and willing to build a relationship with his biological mother. He awkwardly hugged the woman and apologized for making her cry, the sight of which brought a smile to both Berengar and Linde's faces.

"I'm sorry, mommy... Please don't cry!"

Despite his kind words, Honoria could not hold back the tears in her mint green eyes, and instead embraced her baby boy and apologized to him for her own selfishness.

"I'm sorry, Alexandros, I should have been in your life more! That changes now. I promise to be a proper mother to you!"

Berengar nodded his head in approval before joining in. He took both his third wife and their son into his arms and made a solemn vow to the two of them.

"From now on, I promise to spend more time with the two of you as a family!"

Such a remark caused Honoria's tears to dry, and instead a pretty smile formed on her face as she nodded her head in silence. The emotional scene was cut short as Yasmin appeared with her newest child in her arms. She had given birth to a baby girl, who, much like her older brother Ghazi, had a blend of Berengar's features, and her own. The child's name was Zara, and though she was born only recently,

she had a curious glint in her amber eyes as she gazed upon the strange scene that was unfolding in front of her.

Berengar had seen that glance before, in the eyes of his oldest son, when he was still an infant. In his mind, it was a sign of hyper intelligence. Still, he would not know for sure until the girl grew up. He hurried to his fourth wife and their baby girl, kissing Zara on the forehead before hugging onto Yasmin's waist.

Yasmin knew Berengar was acting so shamelessly because he was trying to divert her attention from the scene that had just occurred. She was not so easily deterred and immediately asked the people present about what had transpired.

"Is everything okay? I heard some crying, so I came to check on you guys..."

Honorina nodded her head in response with a wide smile on her face, while petting the hair of her son.

"Everything is fine now..."

Yasmin was curious about what had happened, but she had other things on her mind. Ultimately, she left things be. If everything had already been resolved, then it was not her place to interfere. A seductive smile formed on the woman's lips as she teased her husband before departing.

"Oh, Berengar, I was just about to feed Zara. If I have some leftover, you're more than welcome to claim it for yourself."

Berengar was immediately interested in following the woman, but decided not to when he realized he had just patched things up between Honorina and her son. With a heavy sigh, he shook his head before rejecting the offer.

"I'm afraid that I have other matters to attend to..."

A disappointed expression appeared on the Moorish beauty's face as she nodded her head in defeat.

"I see..."

After saying this, she departed from the area where she fed her newborn daughter. As for Berengar, he spent the rest of the afternoon taking a break from his work, and spending time with Honorina and Alexandros. The boy had never experienced such a carefree setting with his parents before, and was excited beyond belief. ?ll ? ???? Fu?? .c?m

After all was said and done, Berengar retired to his office, where he drafted designs for two new Vessels. If his Army would soon enter the era of the Great War from his past life, then he needed to improve his navy as well.

Berengar knew it would take at least a year of consulting with his best Naval Engineers to perfect the designs he had in mind. An armored frigate was one thing, after all, it was just an ironclad sailing vessel. However, the creation of massive warships was something entirely different.

Berengar was not a naval engineer. Instead, he came from a civil engineering background with a minor in mechanical engineering. He had studied some ships from the library of the US Naval Academy when

he was visiting an old acquaintance, but he could not design a perfectly functional battleship simply from memory.

However, he had the basis of designs in mind, and with the capabilities of his Naval Engineers, such as the old shipwright Evio, who had learned the principles of mechanical engineering from Berengar's tutelage, and those beneath his command, it was possible in the next five years to have a small fleet of battleships supported by battlecruisers and light cruisers.

The quintessential design that would allow these major ships to function was the invention of the steam turbine. Until now, Berengar had used traditional multi-expansion steam engines to power his fleet. However, that would change. The steam turbine was exactly what it sounded like. It was a steam powered turbine engine.

Berengar wanted a battleship that would rule the waves long after his death. For this, a single ship came to mind. The Bayern-Class Superdreadnought was a Battleship created by the German Empire in Berengar's past life during the Great War. Since Berengar would not have to worry about things like submarines or aircraft during his lifetime, he did not bother going with a more advanced battleship like the Bismarck.

In this life, the Bayern-class Dreadnought would be referred to as the Linde-class Battleship. It was a behemoth of a vessel with a length of 180 meters. It had a beam of 30 meters and a draft of 9.39 meters. Three steam turbine engines, three propellers, and fourteen water-tube boilers powered this dreadnought. The ship had a speed of twenty-one knots and a range of five thousand nautical miles. The armament consisted of 8 × 38 cm (15 in) SK L/45 (4 × 2) naval guns, 16 × 15 cm (5.9 in) SK L/45 guns (16 × 1), 2 × 8.8 cm (3.5 in) SK L/45 (2 × 1), and 5 × single 60 cm (24 in) torpedo tubes.

It had 350mm of armor at the belt, 400mm of armor at the conning tower, 100mm of armor at the deck, and 350mm of armor at the turrets. One of these vessels required 1,271 men to operate. Such a behemoth would rule the waves for decades.

In support of these massive battleships, Berengar planned a class of battlecruisers, which he referred to as the Henrietta-class battlecruisers. These would be based upon the uncompleted Ersatz Yorck-class battlecruiser from Berengar's past life. These vessels were designed in 1916, but were never actually finished.

The Henrietta-class battlecruisers would have a length of 227.8 m, a beam of 30.4 m, and a draft of 9.3 m. They would be powered by four steam turbines and four propellers, while being supported by thirty-two boilers. They had a speed of 27.3 knots and a range of 5,500 nautical miles.

The armament of the vessel consisted of 8 × 38 cm (15 in) SK L/45 naval guns, 12 × 15 cm (5.9 in) SK L/45 naval guns, 8 × 8.8 cm (3.5 in) SK L/45 naval guns, and 3 × 60 cm (24 in) torpedo tubes. The armor of the vessel was 300mm on the main belt, 80mm on the deck, 270mm on the turrets, and 150mm on the secondary battery.

The third and final class of vessels Berengar had planned for his new era of naval dominance was a new light cruiser known as the Adela-class cruiser. This vessel was based upon the Königsberg class cruisers that were in use by the Imperial German Navy during the Great War of Berengar's past life.

The length of the vessel was 151.40 m, it had a beam of 14.20 m, and a depth of 5.96 m. The vessel was powered by 2 steam turbines, 2 screw propellers, and 12 water-tube boilers. It had a speed of 27.5 knots, and a range of 4,850 nautical miles.

The proposed vessel was armed with 8 × 15 cm (5.9 in) SK L/45 guns, 3 × 8.8 cm (3.5 in) SK L/45 guns, 4 × 50 cm (19.7 in) torpedo tubes, and 200 mines. The armor of the ship has 60mm at the deck, and 60mm at the belt.

Berengar intended for these three ships to enter production in a couple of years at the most. He did not expect them to fully replace his current fleet of ironclads until another five years. After all, he currently had many shipyards across his Empire, and his ability to produce vessels was expanding yearly.

Of course, Berengar did not expect to be fighting submarines or aircraft in his lifetime. Because of this, he had not chosen more advanced designs like the Bismarck class battleship, which was filled with Anti-aircraft guns. Instead, he expected these vessels to carry on German Naval dominance throughout the rest of his life.

The young Kaiser had no way of knowing that another person had reincarnated into this world on the other side of the planet and was forming the Japanese Empire while he dwelled on these thoughts. He could never expect that he would run into a fleet equal to his own in the next few years. When that moment occurred, it would undoubtedly spark a naval arms race between the two mighty Empires.

### **Chapter 668 - Rise of an Empress**

Having crushed the enemy forces at Naniwa, and decapitated the rebel general Shimazu Takatame in battle, Itami Riyo returned to her capital in Heian-kyō. Though there was a rebellion underway across her realm, the brutal deaths of the Shimazu clan had forced those who dared to revolt against her rule to rethink their actions. For now, Itami had bought herself enough time to begin the introduction of new weapons to her forces.

Itami knew she could not produce massive quantities of Murata rifles without modern machinery and because of this, she had worked hard to create the first steam engines in the history of this world. Or so she thought. She had no way of knowing that an old acquaintance of hers from her past life had reincarnated into this world before her and had already produced such technology years prior.

Itami needed better weapons, and quickly. It was because of this that she put the first steam engines, along with the advanced machinery she had envisioned to use in the Heian-kyō Armory, prioritizing the mass production of modern weapons above all else. She did not have the luxury to focus on the cultural development unlike her German counterpart.

Finally, after substantial effort, the first of the Murata Rifles were manufactured. This single shot, bolt-action rifle was chambered in the black powder 11×60mmR Murata cartridge. Itami had, of course, changed the name of the weapon and caliber to the Itami rifle, and the 11×60mmR Itami cartridge.

She grinned wickedly as she pulled the bolt back on the weapon and inspected its chamber. Her laborers had done their best to produce a functional rifle, and after months of effort, it had finally been completed. This was a prototype weapon, and had yet to be actually tested, but Itami was convinced that it would not take much more tweaking before her troops could be equipped with these weapons en masse. There was a murderous glint in her blood-red eyes as she voiced her ambitions aloud.

"With this rifle, I shall rule the world!"

She did not literally mean she would conquer the entire world, but that Japan would become the dominant global power, something it failed to achieve in her past life. It took her a few moments to break away from her enlightened state, and after doing so, she did not hesitate to issue her orders to the man standing next to her.

"I want this rifle tested immediately! Let me see how well it functions with my own eyes!"

The man immediately snapped to attention as he ordered a few nearby ashigaru to test the weapon in the testing grounds that were prepared outside the armory. A few soldiers dragged out a prisoner of war who was taken from a recent skirmish with a rival Daimyo clan. The man was a full-fledged samurai and would normally be given certain rights. However, to Itami, who sought to usher in a new age of Imperial Power under her reign, it was only fitting that her rifle would be tested on the warrior nobles of the old order.

The man was clad in his full armor for this demonstration, and was bound, gagged, and blindfolded, while Itami's soldiers tied him to a post in the yard. After the prisoner was affixed to his position, a single ashigaru used the weapon as the Shogun had instructed him, and loaded a single cartridge into the chamber before slamming the bolt home. After the weapon was properly loaded, he aimed down the iron sights and aligned them before squeezing the trigger.

A thunderous crack resounded in the air as the 11mm bullet flew down range and into the chest of the target, blasting through his tosei gusoku and penetrating his heart. Upon witnessing the rifle in action, a cruel smile etched itself upon Itami's pretty pink lips as she declared her victory at that moment.

"Haha success! Victory will be mine!"

However, her celebration was cut short as a man approached her with several guards of his own in tow. This man was the Emperor of Japan. For the time being, he was technically the head of state. Even if Itami was the true power in the country. The emperor had a frown on his face as he scolded Itami for something she had done a few hours prior.

"Itami-kun, I hear that you have slapped my son. Explain your actions to me this instant!"

Itami hated it when the emperor referred to her with the honorific Kun, as if she were his subordinate. Did he not realize that she was the one who was in control? The fact that the man had gone out of his way to find her and insult her in front of her soldiers greatly infuriated the young woman. Because of this, she immediately rebuked the emperor in the rudest manner.

"Yamato-san, your son was being a nuisance. I merely disciplined him in your place. You should know better than to question my authority. Had you been doing your job and kept the foolish boy in line, I would not need to raise my hands against him. The next time that twerp raises his voice against me, I will have his tongue removed!"

Such a vicious response caused only further outraged the Emperor. In his eyes, Itami was nothing more than a little girl playing as a shogun. One day, he would overthrow her tyranny and reclaim the glory of the Imperial Family. Itami was roughly nineteen years of age at the moment, and despite this, she wielded unimaginable power. It had been five years since she reincarnated into this world, and four

since she took up the sword as the War Goddess. She had just recently gained the title of Shogun, and despite this, many of her former retainers were now in open rebellion.

This, in itself, was troublesome. However, she also had to keep a close eye on the Imperial Family, which was emotionally taxing, to say the least. The woman immediately rubbed her temples as she dealt with her growing migraine. Of course, the shrill voice of the Emperor when he realized what Itami had done in this testing ground further exasperated her condition.

"Itami-kun, what have you done? Is there a reason this man was executed? Explain yourself this instant!"

Itami was generally a logical and rational person. She knew that if she were to eliminate the Imperial Family while the rest of the country was in open rebellion against her rule, the only thing she would accomplish would be uniting the daimyo against her. However, for whatever reason, the Emperor's shrill screams had caused the young woman to snap. In a moment of animalistic instinct, Itami responded by kicking the emperor in the gut, which forced the man to his knees.

In response to Itami's actions, the Emperor's bodyguards drew their blades and attacked her. However, Itami was a second too quick for them, and unsheathed her sword with such precision that she decapitated one guard before he could even react.

The emperor gazed in horror as one of the few men who was loyal to him was beheaded on the spot. In the blink of an eye, Itami was already engaging with her next target. She quickly forced the man on the back step, where her blade bound with her enemy's. While the two combatants were locked in an armed struggle, Itami kicked the man against the wall. Where she immediately closed the distance and unleashed her tanto with her spare hand and stuck it into the man's neck.

The life faded from the bodyguard's eyes as he stared in disbelief at the vicious woman who had so easily claimed his life. After slaying the two samurai with ease, Itami approached the shivering emperor and made a public declaration.

"Your family has ruled as the Emperors of Japan for long enough. Today, your dynasty comes to an end, and in its place, a new imperial dynasty will rise."

After saying this, Itami slashed her blade downwards and decapitated the Emperor on the spot. Those who witnessed the event gazed in disbelief with their jaws practically reaching the floor. Having killed the Emperor of Japan, Itami issued orders to her troops to storm the Imperial Palace.

"The Yamato Dynasty ends today. Kill the Imperial Family, and anyone who is remotely associated with it. I, Itami Riyo, hereby declare myself Empress of Japan! All who reject my rule shall die by my blade!"

The soldiers who were loyal to Itami immediately unleashed their blades and did as they were ordered. Within a matter of hours, the Yamato family was uprooted and annihilated. Word would spread across the country of Itami's actions, and her declaration. By destroying the Imperial Family and declaring herself the Empress of Japan, Itami had made many enemies. Those who were on the fence about her rule before were quick to turn against her.

Despite this, Itami was not the least bit worried. In three months, her armies would be armed with single shot bolt action rifles, and by then no force in this world could contend with her military might.



The era of Samurai and Shoguns was over. In the land of the rising sun, a new Empress had risen to power. From this day forward, the new Empress would be the supreme authority of the fledgling Japanese Empire.

### **Chapter 669 - Imperial Ambitions**

Itami sat naked in her personal hot spring. Her large breasts, that were usually under wraps, were now hanging freely as she washed the sweat and grime from her body. It had been a month since she slayed the Imperial Family, and things went as exactly as she had predicted.

Those Daimyos who were on the fence of whom to support had joined the rebels, out of all the major Daimyo clans in Japan, only a handful embraced Itami as the Empress. Those who did were fiercely loyal to the War Goddess and believed that she simply could not be defeated.

Itami gazed upon her beautiful reflection in the pool of steamy water as she thought about everything had occurred since she first was reborn in this world. In her past life, she had served in the United States Army as an engineering officer for several years. In fact, she was even deployed to the land of her ancestors, where she lived a peaceful and enjoyable life.

However, before she could even reach her thirtieth birthday, a stalker murdered her. The man in question was jealous that she had developed a relationship with a high-ranking officer. After passing away, she had awoken in this world in the body of a fourteen-year-old girl who was the sole successor of a declining samurai clan.

For her first year in this world, Itami had used her knowledge of basic agricultural practices and industrial techniques to increase the wealth and power of her clan. Unlike Berengar, Itami pre-reincarnation was not a sickly fool, but was trained from birth to become the master of the Itami Clan.

It was not until she was fifteen when the Shogun's forces came to claim the wealth of the Itami Clan for themselves, in the ensuing battle her father was slain, and she was forced to take up the sword in the defense of her family's lands. By introducing simple matchlocks, Itami repelled the Shogun's forces and declared open rebellion against the Ashikaga Shogunate.

Like Berengar, much of her life since reincarnating into this world was filled with conflict. However, that did not mean she did not take the time to develop her territory. Every region she conquered, she ensured it was brought to the peak of a pre-industrial society, and several of the major cities that were beneath her rule had already reached an early industrialized state, with steam engines, and small-scale factories under way.

Still, she was lagging behind Germany. Without her knowledge, an old friend from her past life had reincarnated into this world a few years in advance of herself and went through a similar situation on the other side of the planet. While Itami was just now producing the weapons of the early Meiji Era, Berengar would soon be advancing into the age of the Great War.

Of course, Itami had a no way of knowing what was happening in Germany. However, as she soaked in the heated water of the hot spring, she thought about a certain someone from her past life. In her previous incarnation, the girl had to deal with an emotionally distant Julian. She had later learned about the young man's circumstances after he got himself fragged in Afghanistan and pitied herself for not reaching out to him while he was still alive.

Because of Julian's childhood trauma, he had a difficult time forming emotional bonds with people. This was the reason that he considered no one to be an actual friend. In his mind, he only had acquaintances. However, Itami thought differently. The two of them spent so much time together that they had to have been friends.

She remembered crying her eyes out when she learned the fool had gotten himself killed in the last days of the war. If he had survived another month, he would have been able to pull out of Afghanistan and live a peaceful life. With his talents, he would have made something of himself.

Even now, thinking about such a thing brought tears to Itami's blood-red eyes, which shocked her. She did not know why she was suddenly thinking about that dimwit, but these days she was thinking about that foolish bastard more and more. If, by any chance, Julian had reincarnated into this world, she would never leave him alone. After everything he put her through in her past life. Itami would make sure his life was a living hell.

After thinking about that, Itami giggled like a schoolgirl. Was that anyway to treat an old friend? Absolutely, he deserved to be harassed for breaking her heart. What was the old saying? Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. She highly doubted that Julian would be reincarnated into this world, but if he was, she would hound him to the ends of the Earth.

If Itami had known that the object of her quarrel had not only reincarnated prior to her, but made himself the Emperor of Germany with a harem of five beautiful women, she would probably cut her own heart out. She was having such a difficult time finding a competent man to take as her husband, and that bastard had four wives and a mistress. Where was the justice in the world?

Of course, Itami wouldn't even dream of this being a possibility. For the entire time that she knew him, Julian was as dense as a rock, and she suspected he had died a virgin. There was no way she would ever believe that he had become a real ladies' man in this new life. If someone were to tell her such a thing, she would laugh it off as the biggest joke on the planet.

After thinking about this for some time, Itami got out of the hot spring. She had much to do, and little time to do it in. Itami quickly dressed herself in a kimono before walking through the confines of the Palace with a confident stride. The servants in the Palace did not dare to lay their gaze upon the Empress's seductive appearance in fear that she might claim their heads in retaliation.

Itami eventually reached her personal quarters, where she sat down at her desk and sprawled out a map with a bottle of sake in her hands. She took a giant swig from the alcoholic beverage before shifting her gaze towards the contents on the map. It was a map of Asia which proudly displayed her imperial ambitions.

Much like the Empire of Japan in her past life, Itami's imperial ambitions were not small in the slightest. The first target on her list of regions was Hokkaido. After she had dealt with the rebellion against her rule in the Japanese mainland, she planned on seizing the northernmost island of Japan. From there, she would make her way to the Ryukyu Kingdom and conquer it. After she had established a staging point in Okinawa, she would set sail for Korea and display the Dominance of her Army on the peninsula.

However, this is where Itami's imperial ambitions in Northeast Asia ended. Despite what one might think, she had no desire to invade China. The bad blood that had existed between her people and the

Chinese would not repeat itself in this world. This was not from the goodness of the young woman's heart, but rather a solemn recognition that she could not take China even if she tried. If she were truly dedicated to invading the Ming Dynasty, it would become her Afghanistan. The territory was too vast, and the people were too many for her to properly contend with.

Because of this, the regions once claimed by China in her past life were left out of her Imperial Ambitions, instead she would spread from Korea to Southeast Asia, conquering the lands that were known in her previous life as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Finally Australasia.

If her teenage years were spent uniting Japan under her banner, then her twenties would be a time of global expansion. Of course, she did not know that Berengar also had planned to one day take the region of Australasia for himself. If fate were cruel, the two of them would meet in the region and battle for supremacy.

Itami knew that if her future conquests went as planned, then the Japanese Empire would become the supreme overlord of the Pacific. Perhaps she might even stretch into the west coast of North America and colonize the lands for the Japanese. With such a vast Empire under her control, she believed nobody would ever be able to contend with her power.

Thus, she had a devilish smirk on her face as she gazed upon the map of her future Empire, and spoke in a soft tone.

"Soon... Soon it will all be mine!"

The young Empress did not know that her German Counterpart had already united the German-speaking regions into a single Empire, and had begun colonial expansion into the Americas. Berengar was one step ahead of Itami on the game of Global Hegemony. By the time the two monarchs became aware of each other's existence, their empires would stretch far and wide.

#### Chapter 670 A Difficult Life Outside the Empire

While Berengar focused on expanding the Industry of his Empire, and securing his borders. Itami had begun her plans for modernization of her newly formed Imperial Japanese Army. Soon enough the woman would launch an attack on the rebels, and cut the heads off the multi-headed hydra that were her enemies.

However, this was not the only major events occurring in the world. The Sultanate of Al-Andalus had invaded Morrocco, and while Hasan was off playing the role of a Conqueror, German forces exerted control over Iberia, ensuring that the Spanish and Portuguese people did not raise their swords in rebellion.

However, war was not the only major events going on in the western world. As a result of the Catholic League's sanctions against the German Empire, poverty, famine, and pestilence had begun to spread across the Catholic World. This did not only affect the peasants, but the nobility as well.

Millions of young French women flooded the German border, seeking asylum and marriage with German men. They no longer cared if they were a second, third, fourth, or fifth wife, so long as they could escape the cruel fate that awaited them in their homeland.

It was not only France that was having this problem. In the neighboring Kingdom of Hungary, things were not going well for the average person. Even the nobility have suffered under the catastrophic effects of the trade embargo that the Catholic Kingdoms had presented against the mighty German Empire. Many of the products that Europe relied upon for survival were no longer entering the Catholic Kingdoms. One of these commodities was medicine.

Over the past eight years since Berengar had first entered this world, the medical industry of the German Empire had grown substantially, supported by the chemical manufacturing plants, many modern forms of medicine such as anti-biotic cream, and penicillin were products that people all over Europe now relied upon for their survival.

The German Empire had a simple policy of trade. Anything that they had manufactured an excess of, they would sell to the neighboring kingdoms at a reasonable price. However, with the Catholic League placing many sanctions against the Reich, these products no longer entered the neighboring kingdoms and because of it, the people suffered.

A young Hungarian nobleman by the name of Vászoly Viktor stood over the grave of his younger sister. The funeral for the girl had just ended, and yet he remained behind. Tears streamed down his eyes as he repeated the words.

"I'm sorry..."

This young man came from a wealthy family, and despite all the fortune they had earned throughout the centuries, it was not enough to save his sister's life. If Hungary had remained in trade with the neighboring German Empire, he could have purchased the medicine he needed to treat his sister's illness. Unfortunately, the King had embargoed all goods from the Reich.

A black market had developed supported by German smugglers who carried contraband across their borders into the neighboring realms. However, even then, medicine was in high demand and was almost impossible to get one's hands on without having ties to the German pharmaceutical corporations.

It wasn't just illness that had spread across the land, famine came with it. In previous years, the nobles of the Kingdom of Hungary had imported artificial fertilizers from the Reich. This product helped in the growing of his crops. Without it, the harvests had suffered in terms of quantity and quality. If not for the Catholic Church and its obsession with bringing down the German Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary would thrive right now.

Viktor and his family were just one of many noble houses that had suffered immensely under the sanctions, and he knew that the other Catholic Kingdoms were also enduring similar hardships. If only he could convince his father to send his little sister to the Reich in pursuit of a political marriage, she would still be alive.

Unfortunately, the hatred for the German reformation ran deep in the veins of the Catholics, and their most devout members would rather die than send their daughters as brides to the German men. He would not make the same mistake with his youngest sister, who was still alive. Now that his father was off on crusade, Viktor was the acting head of his house, and he intended to ship his little sister to the borders of the Reich to ensure that she could live a happy and peaceful life in the German Empire. Having wiped the tears from his eyes, Viktor made a solemn vow to his now deceased sister.

"I promise you, I won't let Noemi follow you into an early grave..."

After saying this, Viktor departed and returned to his family's estate where he found his little sister, Noemi was sitting by her lonesome. The rest of the family were busy weeping over her elder sister's death, and only a stuffed toy that her brother had bought from Germany years prior kept the girl company. Despite being thirteen years old, Noemi loved the stuffed rabbit more than anything, and dragged it around with her everywhere she went. Viktor approached his little sister and patted her auburn hair before commenting on the situation at hand.

"Noemi, what happened to your sister was a tragedy. However, you don't have to worry. I will use my contacts to help you immigrate to the Reich, where I will find a proper husband for you. You will live in peace and luxury, like your sister should have."

The girl had a blank expression on her face as she gazed out into the distance, not looking at anything in particular. She had heard what her brother said, but had no reaction other than questioning his words.

"What about father?"

The two of them both knew that their father despised the German Empire, and everyone in it. He would never agree to sell his daughter off to some German nobleman so that she could live a luxurious life. However, after witnessing the death of his other sister, Viktor refused to allow the girl to follow the same path.

There was nothing left for her in Hungary, so long as the Kingdom stood opposite of the Reich it would never prosper. That was the genuine belief of the young nobleman. With a bitter smile on his face, Viktor petted his sister's hair before assuring her that everything was alright.

"You let me worry about, father. I am sure that a happy life awaits you in the Reich. Did you know that your brother has visited the city of Graz? Compared to Budapest, it is like a city forged from the heavens. Such wealth, and opulence, I have seen nothing like it before.

The average person there lives better than much of our nobility. Food is in abundance, medicine is widely available, and they have this magnificent device of travel called a train, which can rapidly bring you between the major cities of Austria. I have heard since my last visit, the railway which these trains travel upon have expanded into Bavaria, Saxony, and Prussia as well."

Despite his story of visiting Austria, the young girl remained emotionless. She simply nodded her head in silence. Losing her elder sister was a tremendous blow to her fragile mind, and she was struggling with her grief. After a few moments of reflection, the girl finally looked up at her brother and asked the question on her mind.

"What about you Viktor? Will you be coming with me to Germany?"

The young man choked back his tears as heard this question. He wanted more than anything to accompany the girl, however he could only shake his head in response.

"Unfortunately, I am needed here. Besides, German immigration laws are strict. I don't believe I would be able to permanently reside in the Empire. However, you will have a proper escort and caretakers who will look after you and, more importantly, make an appropriate match for you on my behalf."

In response to this, the young girl hugged her brother tightly. She remained silent, but her eyes did her speaking for her. She was thankful that he was taking such a risk so that she could live a better life. Things were only going to get worse in Hungary if these trade embargos continued. Before long, it may even reduce their wealthy family to destitution. It was not uncommon for Catholic Noble families to lose everything in these troubling times.

Unfortunately, Viktor couldn't follow his sister to the German Empire. He had to remain in his family's lands and do his best to keep them afloat. While his father was off crusading in the Holy Land, he was preparing himself for the upcoming war with the German Empire. Fully aware that he would be forced into battle.

Win or lose in the Holy Land, the Crusader armies would immediately after turn their attention to Germany, and having witnessed the technological marvels that existed in the Reich, Viktor was certain that the Catholic League would be defeated. He could only sigh and lament his lot in life, as he kept his sister company during these troubling times.