

Steel 691

Chapter 691 - Digging your own Grave

Two weeks had passed since Ava and her family first arrived in Kufstein. During this time the woman had spent her days looking after her own children, and making sure that her husband didn't do anything foolish, like offend somebody more prominent than him. Ava kept her distance from Berengar as per the man's request and ensured that Wolfgang did not even come in contact with him.

If it weren't for her own children, and the fact that Hans was so attached to her, Ava probably would have become overwhelmed with despair, as even her own sister had become rather callous with her. Initially, she thought they were starting to get along, but for whatever reason, Adela had turned cold to her after that first day.

Hans spent a significant amount of time around his aunt. Whenever the two of them were together, he would preach of his father's accomplishments. Unknowingly, Ava soon found herself fantasizing about what life would have been like had she actually married Berengar.

As the days passed, Wolfgang and Ava fought more frequently, usually over petty things revolving around the man's own inability. For whatever reason, his wife was now comparing him to the Kaiser, which got on his nerves. He knew it was the doing of the little redheaded brat, but he could not even scold the boy without his wife threatening him.

Linde had become more busy with work, as tensions rose between the Papacy and the German Empire following the assassination of the College of Cardinals. As a result, Ava had taken over her motherly role for all of Berengar's children, at least temporarily. Currently, Ava and Hans were having a conversation as she prepared some sandwiches for all the children who were now running around the Palace.

"Aunty Ava... Have you heard of the Battle of Oberstdorf?"

Ava raised her brow slightly as she mixed the canned tuna with the mayonnaise. She recalled hearing the term before, but was not fully familiar with the events that led to Berengar's rise to power.

"It sounds familiar Hans, why don't you tell your aunt all about it over lunch!"

Hans smiled as he helped the woman prepare the sandwiches for his siblings and cousins. Before long, the table was set, and tuna melts were sitting at every spot. Berengar's kids loved Linde's Tuna Melts, and Hans had given the recipe to Ava, thus she could prepare the kids' favorite meal, while tasting it for the first time herself.

After setting the table, Ava rang a bell, signalling that it was lunchtime, and before long the entire table was filled up with Berengar's and Ava's children. At least those who were old enough to eat such a meal, the younger ones had already been fed by Ava earlier in the day.

Hans and Ava took a bite out of the meal, where they both exclaimed in pleasure. As for Hans, he complimented the woman's efforts in an attempt to gain her favor..

"Mmm, just like how mommy makes it!"

Ava was flattered by the boy's words and quickly remembered that he was talking about some battle earlier. Thus, she did not hesitate, and inquired further about it.

"So, Hans, you mentioned the battle of Oberstdorf?"

Hans immediately smiled when the woman brought up his prior topic and went on a rant about his father's accomplishments in battle.

"Oh right! Aunty Ava, the battle of Oberstdorf, happened a few years ago, between my father and his brother Lambert. Apparently Lambert tried to kill father, and because of that he was exiled from our family. He ended up returning some time later with an army of crusaders. However mommy, and father outsmarted him and set up an ambush. In the battle, father lost not only his favorite horse but also the use of his right eye, hence why he wears an eyepatch. In the end, father won the battle, and killed uncle Lambert in single combat."

Ava found herself instinctively fantasizing about Berengar charging on horseback into the enemy army. She began to blush as she imagined his bravery. Completely unaware that her husband was nearby scowling at her. Wolfgang could no longer hold his tongue and interpreted the woman's fantasies with his own thoughts on the matter.

"Your father was a fool. He charged the enemy lines despite having a clear advantage on the hills above. He should have held his position and eliminated the enemy. I heard the crusaders surrounded him, and he used some underhanded tactics to kill his brother after getting his ass kicked. The battle of Oberstdorf was your father's biggest humiliation, and yet you speak about it as if it was some grand victory."

Ava's mouth dropped when she heard her husband insult the Kaiser in his own home. Was this fool tired of living? Before she could rebuke him for his comments, Hans spoke up. Though the boy could verbally shred his uncle in a war of words, he decided the best way to defeat the man was to continue his cute act, and innocently ask a question he could not proudly answer.

"Have you won many battles, uncle Wolfgang?"

Upon hearing the boy ask him such a question, Wolfgang looked like he had eaten a bowl of shit. Ava ultimately broke out into laughter as she pet her nephew's strawberry blonde hair while complimenting him.

"Hans, you're so cute!"

Wolfgang was visibly enraged at this point. The fact that his wife was laughing at him and his lack of courage was the last straw. Before Ava had realized it, Wolfgang had reached across the table and slapped the Prince across the cheek. With a vicious glare on his face, he yelled at the boy.

"You dare humiliate me in front of my wife!?!"

Ava stared at her husband in disbelief. Did he really just slap the young Prince of Germany? She regretted every marrying the man. Now her life, and that of her children, were in danger. She had but one choice and did not hesitate as she quickly screamed at the top of her lungs.

"Guards!"

Wolfgang reacted in shock when he heard his wife call out for the guards.

"Honey, what are you doing?"

Ava did not respond, and instead was trying to calm down Hans, who was crying after having been slapped by his uncle.

"Shhh... Hans, it's okay. Aunty will make sure he never hurts you again!"

The woman held her nephew up to her substantial bosom, where the boy smirked at his uncle, without Ava realizing. The man felt enraged at the sight, that is until the Guards approached. Ava was quick to inform them of what had happened.

"Arrest this man. He has dared to lay his hands on the Prince!"

Wolfgang realized he was in trouble and tried to escape. The guards immediately reacted by chasing after him.

"Stop right there, criminal scum!"

The guards eventually surrounded Wolfgang and apprehended him with little effort. The man could only glare at his wife, as she coddled the Prince cursing out to her while she did so.

"You fucking bitch! You would turn on your own husband!"

Ava merely sneered at the man in disdain as her children gazed in horror at their father's arrest. She spat out venomous words as the man was taken away.

"You have dug your own grave, Wolfgang. Even I can't save you from your own stupidity... Don't worry, I will take good care of the children!"

The moment Wolfgang was out of sight, Hans stopped crying, where Ava smiled at him. She was concerned for her own safety, and that of her children more so than her husband's. After all, she had heard rumors of Berengar's ruthlessness against those who harmed his family, and she did not want to become another victim. She kissed Hans on his reddened cheek while trying to gain his aid.

"Hans, you must protect your Aunty Ava. I know how furious your father can be. You must speak up on my behalf! I had no part in this!"

Hans pretended to cry the entire time. He had even summoned his tears of his own accord, thus he was quick to seal Wolfgang's fate.

"Okay, Aunty... but I need you to speak to father with me... I won't be enough to convince him..."

Ava was terrified at the prospect of pleading with Berengar for mercy. She remembered the cruelty in his eyes the last time she had upset him. She wanted no part in it. However, the gaze Hans was giving her was reassuring, and thus, she calmed her heart before nodding her head in response to the boy's request.

"Very well... If that is what it takes, I will speak to your father with you..."

Hans smiled as he hugged his aunt. The woman was completely unaware that she was playing into the boy's hands. However, it was too late. Wolfgang had acted rashly and had struck the Prince. His life was forfeited. However, perhaps Berengar could be convinced to spare him for a price. Thus, Hans grabbed hold of his aunt's hand and led her to his father's office.

Chapter 692 - A Plea for Leniency

Berengar became aware of the disturbance that happened within his own halls not long after the incident took place. He was outraged, beyond measure. He had invited Wolfgang and his family into his own home, and yet the man not only insulted him, but struck his child. Berengar was left with no option. He would execute the man for his offense.

However, something shocking happened. Before he could even leave his office, the victim of the assault, as well as the offender's wife, approached him. Berengar sat back in his chair, while Ava sat across from his desk with Hans in her lap. The Kaiser was aware that his son had a certain soft spot for his aunt, and thus he did not question it. Instead, he repeated what the woman had said to him in disbelief.

"You want me to spare your husband? Are you out of your God damn mind?"

Truthfully, Ava wanted Wolfgang dead. Since he had been deposed by his younger brother Adelbrand, he had been nothing but a burden to her. However, it was unlikely that she was likely to be remarried, and she had no wealth of her own to speak of.

If she had the slightest chance of marrying another man after Wolfgang's death, then she at least had to play the part of the dutiful wife. Thus, she bowed her head slightly as she pleaded with the German Emperor for leniency.

"I know what my husband did was wrong, and that he deserves to die for his actions. However, if you execute him, I will become the widow of a traitor. No man would wish to marry me! How am I supposed to look after my kids!?!"

Berengar had a sneer of disdain on his face as he simply ignored Ava's request.

"That is not my concern. Wolfgang should have thought about the consequences of his actions before doing something as foolish as assaulting the Prince of Germany. He will die. It is just a matter of time..."

Hans noticed the worried expression on Ava's face and quickly spoke up on her behalf.

"Father! Have you no pity for Aunty Ava? Her only sin is being wedded off to a fool! If you kill her husband, she will have nowhere left to go! You better be prepared to take responsibility!"

The boy's statements immediately dumbfounded Berengar. Responsibility? For what? It's not like he got the woman pregnant! Just what nonsense was the boy speaking? Berengar could not handle his son's comments anymore and quickly kicked him out of the room.

"Hans, this is a discussion between adults. Leave us..."

Hans was a stubborn little brat. He did not want to leave his aunt behind until he had some assurances that she would be taken care of. However, his father's glare was truly frightening, and after a few moments, he could not resist the urge to flee any longer. He had a sorrow filled expression as he left Ava behind to deal with his father's wrath alone.

"I'm sorry Aunty Ava!"

After saying this, Hans scurried off, leaving the woman alone with the most terrifying man she had ever met. When the door shut behind her, she expected Berengar to scream at her. However, to her surprise, he sighed heavily and poured two drinks, handing one to the woman with a look of sympathy on his face.

"Go on drink, it will make you feel better..."

The woman did as she was instructed, but the kind gesture confused her. She was about to voice her concerns when Berengar interrupted her.

"You have been through a lot because of that idiot, haven't you?"

Perhaps it was the booze, or Berengar's kind tone, but Ava broke down crying, releasing all the emotions she had bottled up for the past few years. Berengar had difficulty sitting by and watching the woman cry, thus he awkwardly got up and comforted her. In between her sobbing, Ava would utter nonsense like.

"You have no idea!"

"That fucking idiot!"

She continued to cry for some time. After nearly half an hour had passed, she was no longer capable of crying. Now that her emotions had been released, Berengar stated the facts that could not be avoided.

"Wolfgang has struck the Prince, without proper authority, or justification. That is a capital offense. If I do not take his life, then the authority of my dynasty will diminish, and I can not allow that to happen."

Ava felt like she was going to break out into tears again as she imagined the cruel fate that awaited her after Wolfgang's death. Truthfully, she did not care in the slightest about that fool or his miserable life, but she cared about her children. She could not imagine what difficulties they would face once their father was gone. However, Berengar's next actions shocked her. He wiped the droplets from the woman's eyes and grabbed hold of her dainty chin before uttering some reassurances.

"Wolfgang must die for his crimes.... However, you are my cousin, and my sister by law. I will not throw you to the wolves just because your husband is an idiot. You and your family will be allowed to reside in the Palace until a man realizes what a catch you are, and marries you. I don't believe it will be as difficult as you think.

You may be a mother of four, but you are one of the three heavenly beauties of Austria. You are still young and fertile. Plenty of men would be willing to marry you, and if they aren't, you will always have a place in my household. I just wish-

Before Berengar could finish his sentence, Ava pressed her lips against his, an act which startled the Kaiser. Though he was shocked, he did not resist. After all, he would be a liar if he said he felt no attraction to the woman. More importantly, it would be more humiliating to cuckold her husband before killing him. Since she was willing, he did not hesitate.

Berengar quickly stripped the woman of her dress, all the while kissing her passionately. In the end, only her undergarments remained, which were the same deep blue as her eyes. Like Linde, she was a mother

of four, and despite that, her figure was still exceptionally attractive. Though she had more body fat than Linde did, such a thing only added to her milfy appearance.

Berengar quickly unstrapped the woman's bra, before lacing her down on her knees. The woman quickly pulled down his trousers to reveal his massive rod. She was shocked to see such a thing, as her husband could not even compare in size. She was so stunned by its size that she had to ask whether she was witnessing reality.

"Is this thing real?"

Berengar merely chuckled as he nodded in silence. Ava no longer hesitated. She stuck the enormous shaft in between her massive breasts and squeezed it tightly. Despite the size of her tits, the length of Berengar's rod exceeded them, and she was forced to suck his tip to compensate. Berengar grinned as the woman pleased him. If he had one complaint about Adela's physique, it was that her breasts were not large enough to pull this off.

The woman lactated in the middle of the act, where she used her breastmilk as lubrication for her partner's shaft. After a while, Berengar could no longer hold back, and sprayed his seed all over the woman's throat. Such a large amount of sperm shocked the woman, but she quickly swallowed it down with a sultry expression on her lips.

"Wow... so much!"

Berengar chuckled when he heard this before laying the woman on top of his desk. He gazed at her wet pussy with lust. Despite having given birth to four children, it still appeared to be tight and puffy. He did not hesitate to stick his dick inside while taunting his sister-in-law.

"You must have been very frustrated dealing with a dope like Wolfgang all these years. Well, allow me to replace your memories with him!"

The walls of Ava's cunt sucked Berengar in like a vacuum. He slammed his hips forward with all his might, immediately causing the woman to moan with pleasure. The two of them went at it for some time before Berengar released his seed deep inside the woman's womb.

"Get pregnant, bitch!"

Simultaneously, the couple came together. Meanwhile, Ava had long sensed lost her rationality. She could hardly believe that Adela had experienced such pleasure all these years, meanwhile she had suffered through her husband's lack of ability. She knew if this continued any longer, she would become addicted to Berengar. After it was all over, and the two of them cleaned up, where Berengar made a snide remark.

"I promise you, I won't kill your husband until after you are pregnant with my child. I'd love to see the look on his face when he sees your round belly while he walks out to the gallows."

Ava could not help but laugh at such a comment while dressing in her clothes.

"What a sight that will be!"

Whether Ava would become Berengar's second mistress, or simply be a means to amuse himself with, He did not know the answer. However, the idea of fathering a few bastards appealed to him. Of course,

the moment Adela found out about his infidelity with her sister, she was bound to react horribly. However, Berengar was not concerned. He had Linde in his corner, and she would happily calm Adela's wrath for him.

Chapter 693 - The Itami Clan

With the Mōri rebellion defeated, and the ringleaders captured. Itami's reign had been secured. However, rather than returning to the capital city of Heian-kyō immediately after her victory, Itami had opted to spend some time with her family. Her father had passed away shortly after her reincarnation into this world. However, her mother and sister were still very much alive.

They had heard rumors of Itami Riyo's exploits throughout the past few years, but had hardly believed what they were told. That is, until an army of ten thousand plus men arrived at their home, swearing that they would defend the fortress from the enemy that would soon be arriving. After the battle was over and the corpses were cleared, Riyo entered her home for the first time in years.

She clutched her chest with her hand, feeling the intense pounding of her heart as he walked towards the entrance of her family's home. The young woman was incredibly anxious as she dreaded the idea of reuniting with her family. The last time she spoke with her mother was when she departed on poor terms.

Riyo had taken up the sword in an act of retribution for her father's murder. Something her mother disapproved of greatly. The woman felt that despite not bearing a proper son for her husband, the duty of the Itami Clan should not fall to such a young woman. Riyo's mother had some choice words to say and in the end, Riyo left her family behind in pursuit of vengeance.

The moment Riyo stepped through the doorway to her family's home, something unexpected happened. A beautiful young girl no older than fifteen who was dressed in a kimono rushed towards her, and glomped the new Empress, as if her supreme status was nothing compared to the bond the two girls shared.

Riyo fell to the floor at the Castle's entrance, while her guards gazed in horror. They had failed to perceive or stop such a threat to their Empress; they were about to rip the girl away from Riyo's arms, when she glared at them menacingly, the frightening gaze of the Empress's blood-red eyes froze the actions of the bodyguards who simply stood by and watched as the two young women embraced on the ground.

Riyo was struggling not to flush in embarrassment as she realized her soldiers were watching her be so intimate with her younger sister. Ultimately, she forced the young girl's face away from her own and scolded her.

"Momo-chan, let go! Is this any way to treat your onee-chan?"

The girl named Itami Momo immediately pouted, as her jet black hair poured down her face like a river of ink. She had not seen her sister in so long. It was a cause of quite some grief for the girl who always relied on her elder sister growing up.

"Nee-chan! You're so mean!"

Riyo quickly facepalmed as she rose to her feet and dusted off her uniform. She reached out a hand to help up her little sister, who was more than happy to latch onto it. Standing in the doorway watching the whole scene was Riyo's most loyal supporter. General Shiba Kiyohiko who did not know how to react to what he was witnessing. When Riyo noticed his expression, she introduced her little sister with an awkward smile.

"This is my little sister, Itami Momo, as you can see she is a little bit clingy..."

Momo pouted once more than she heard this while chastising Riyo for introducing her in such a strange way.

"Nee-chan! Don't make me seem weird!"

Riyo merely smiled as she petted her little sister's hair. She had more important matters to deal with than entertaining this brat, thus; she was quick to ask about their mother.

"Momo-chan, Is Mibu-san around?"

Before Momo could answer, the mature voice of an older woman interrupted the scene. There was a snide hint to her voice, as if she was scolding her errant child for being so unfilial in her duties.

"Ara ara, is that any way to refer to your mother? It breaks my heart to see you refer to me so informally. What could I have possibly done to deserve such a thing?"

The curvy figure of a mature beauty appeared in the hallway. The woman, though in her early forties, looked as if she were at least ten years younger. She had a beautifully sculpted face with little sign of age. Her features resembled those of a vixen, and she had the aura of a nine-tailed fox.

The soldiers who normally worshipped Riyo as their war goddess instantly felt compelled to drop to their knees in the presence of such overwhelming beauty. However, under the ever watchful gaze of the Empress, they did not dare do so.

The friction between the two women could cut a diamond in half. Riyo glared at her mother with a complicated expression, while the woman named Mibu Saya simply stared at her daughter with a haughty expression. The years had been kind to her, though Riyo did not explicitly send her regards to her family in the forms of writing, she ensured that her mother and sister were well looked after.

The fortune the woman had at her fingertips was enough to buy multiple cities. Naturally, she lived a life of total luxury in the castle that Itami had built for her. Never worrying about the security of herself or her youngest daughter. Riyo gazed upon the opulent kimono that the woman was wearing and sighed heavily before making an attempt at a snarky remark.

"Mibu-San-"

However, before Riyo could get the words out, her mother smacked the top of her head with her silk hand fan and lectured the girl on her informal language.

"It is Okaa-san! Refer to your mother properly!"

Riyo struggled to wear a smile as she dealt with her mother's insistence. Ultimately, this was a battle she was not going to win, and she knew it. Thus, with a heavy sigh, she conceded to the woman's demands and referred to her by the proper term.

"Okaa-san... It seems the years have been kind to you. You look even younger than when I departed..."

The mature beauty broke out into a slight giggle as she made a surprising comment.

"It is all thanks to the products you have churned out here in the Itami Domain. The skin creams that your factories produce are truly divine! I suppose if there's one good thing to come from your little rebellion, it is all the little luxuries you have provided me and your sister with. You don't know how many marriage proposals I have had to turn down on little Momo's behalf."

Momo blushed when she heard her mother mention such nonsense and quickly cried out to her in protest.

"Okaa-san! Don't say such weird things!"

Riyo sighed when she noticed that her family was getting along just fine without her, hell it appeared they were not the least bit affected by the siege that was taking place just hours prior. She instantly regretted worrying about the two women when she realized how little they seemed to care about the conflict outside their borders.

"Okaa-san, I will be staying here for a few days before returning to the capital. I trust that won't be an issue?"

Mibu Saya smiled as she heard this and led the way for Riyo and her troops into her home.

"Of course. I look forward to your visit. We have much to discuss now that you have finally returned home. Shame on you, girl, you should have visited your mother sooner! Have you no sense of filial duty to your parents?"

At this moment, Riyo wanted to find the nearest cliff so that she could jump off it. Her mother was always like this. Ultimately, she and her guards followed her mother and sister into the depths of the Castle where Mibu Saya had already prepared a feast for them. All the staples that Itami had introduced to Japanese cuisine were present. The mature women continuously fed Sake to her daughter as the two engaged in nonsensical conversation.

Momo watched from the side with a hint of envy in her heart when she witnessed the special attention that her mother was giving her older sister. It had always been this way. Out of the two siblings, Riyo was their parents' favorite.

She thought that with Riyo gone, her mother would dote on her a bit more, but that did not occur. Ultimately, the awkward atmosphere between Saya doting on Riyo, and Riyo politely rejecting the woman's kindness came to an end when the mature beauty asked her daughter a serious question.

"So, Riyo, when will you be getting married?"

Riyo nearly spat out her sake as she heard her mother so shamelessly approach the topic that most annoyed her. She instantly scolded her mother for speaking of such things.

"That is none of your concern! Why would you ask me that?"

The woman had a graceful smile on her face as she rested her dainty chin in the palm of her hand while feigning ignorance.

"Huh? But you're already nineteen, and yet you are still unmarried. Don't tell me you don't have any suitors? Oh my, it is as I have feared. Your gung ho attitude has scared away all the good men. At this point, if Okaa-san doesn't intervene on your behalf, then you will die old and alone!"

Riyo immediately fired back at her mother's attempts to meddle in her love life with a flustered expression on her face.

"Absolutely not! I won't have you setting me up with some unknown man! I refuse to settle down and marry until I find the man who is capable of defeating me in battle! It is not my fault all the men in this country are worthless!"

Saya merely drank from her own sake before shaking her head with a look of pity on her face. She merely muttered the words.

"Oh, you poor thing..."

After saying this, the woman became dead silent. Riyo looked around and saw the awkward expressions on the faces of everyone present and immediately stormed off.

"Screw this! I need some air!"

Momo tried to run after her sister, but Saya merely shot her a cold glance, freezing the girl in her tracks. Thus, the first meeting Riyo had with her family in several years ended with an awkward atmosphere.

Chapter 694 - Renewed Hostilities in the HolyLand

Over the past few months, the War for the Holy Land had reached a stalemate. The crusaders had seized acre and, with its fall, so too did much of the surrounding area end up in the hands of the Catholic Church. As a response to the losses they had suffered, the Byzantine-Timurid Alliance made a strategic withdrawal to Jerusalem, where they regrouped with allied forces from the Province of Egypt.

During the months since the Crusade had begun, tens of thousands now lied dead, and the Catholics had begun to purge the lands that they conquered. Germany had remained neutral, as their allies had not called upon them for support. Instead, they provided military aid in the form of weapons and armor to the Byzantine and Timurid forces.

While waiting for hostilities to reignite, Sultan Salan of the Timurid Empire used this limited timeframe to rush his soldiers through the training required to use the muskets and cannons that they had purchased from the Reich.

Because Germany had a massive industry dedicated to the manufacture of saltpeter, they did not rely on natural deposits and could easily export what excess they had to their allies. Thus, unlike the Catholics who had to carefully manage their gunpowder stockpiles, the Byzantine and Timurid forces were free to conduct as many drills as they required.

When the Catholic Kings became aware of this, they realized that the longer this war dragged out, the less likely they were to win it. As such, the Crusader commanders met in Acre to discuss the issues they faced.

King Aubry de Valois, King Lawrence Lancaster, the Duke Marcel de Burgundy, King Andrzej Jagiellon of Poland, the King of Hungary, as well as the grandmasters of the Orders Hospitaller, and Red Dragon were all gathered in a dedicated meeting area. They were seated upon rather plush chairs as they debated the best course of action to end the war as swiftly as possible.

Aubry did not have his usual feminine demeanor, considering he was dealing with representatives of the church. He had tied his long honey hair into a ponytail and forsook the use of makeup. He glared intensely across the room at the Duke of Burgundy, who was his ex-lover. The fact that the two men could enter the same room together without resorting to violence was impressive in itself.

Duke Marcel de Burgundy was a man in his early thirties. He was a handsome man, with mid-length auburn hair and deep blue eyes. If looks could kill, then Aubry would be a dead man right now. The French King had just made a suggestion, one which the Duke of Burgundy could not tolerate. This he repeated his former lover's words as if the suggestion were completely insane.

"You want me to lead my forces to the holy city and draw the enemies out of Jerusalem? How the hell am I supposed to do that? The enemy is preparing themselves for the next round of hostilities. They will not bother to leave their fortified walls in pursuit of a small force of Burgundians!

What we need to do is march on Jerusalem while they are still unprepared, and take the city by force. Either we take the Holy City, and declare Catholic rule over the region, or we are defeated. One thing is certain, we can not sit here and wait any longer!"

Aubry did not respond to Marcel's rejection of his plan, and instead merely pouted. The other monarchs were uncomfortable with the current situation, but it was ultimately the King of Poland who denied both suggestions.

"By now, the Strategos of Egypt has marched his forces into Jerusalem. If we assault the city, it will be a costly affair. Assuming we are victorious, then we will not have the remaining men necessary to take the rest of the Holy Land. At most, we will own a few cities on the coasts which we will barely be able to maintain control over. There must be an alternate path forward."

Ultimately, it was the opinion of the Grand Master of the Order of the Red Dragon who came up with a solution to the problem at hand.

"Perhaps I can make a suggestion. My Drake Cannons have a superior range than those used by our enemies. We can effectively sit back and bombard the city into submission. No matter how many men may defend the city, it does not matter if they can not reach our artillery. They will be forced to surrender eventually, and we won't have to risk the lives of our soldiers."

The various kings gazed upon the Grand Master of the Order of the Red Dragon with dumbfounded expressions on their faces. The reality was they were so used to being technologically behind their enemies in all aspects that they did not even think of this as a possibility.

Though the rifled muzzle loaders of the Order of the Red Dragon lacked explosive firepower, or versatility to be truly effective on the field, they were excellent siege weapons. They could likely bombard the enemy's defences until nothing remained. Still, the amount of gunpowder needed for such a siege would be no paltry sum. Thus, King Lawrence of England was quick to voice his concerns.

"Do we have enough gunpowder to sustain such a siege and still have some leftover for our forces afterward?"

The King of Hungary was the one to answer this question, as he had a smug smirk on his face.

"Of course, it will cost a pretty penny, no doubt, but I can easily send a message to the Golden Horde to increase the supply of saltpeter. As for the funds, I doubt the Papacy is lacking. I'm sure the Pope would be more than happy to fund the resources required to be victorious in his crusade."

The various heads of states continued to discuss this matter for a few more moments in explicit detail before deciding on a proper course of action. Ultimately, they unanimously agreed upon on the idea of bombarding Jerusalem into submission.

Little did the Crusaders know that while they were conversing on how best to achieve victory in their crusade, their rivals in the city of Jerusalem were having their own strategic conference on how to best win this war. The Strategos of Egypt was quick to voice his concerns over the defeat at Acre.

"I may have only just entered this conflict, but my scouts report that the enemy has introduced new artillery pieces to the battlefield. We should be very cautious about how we proceed. If we do not know the capabilities of these new weapons, we might make a serious error that could cost us not only control of the city but also the war. We need to send some spies to infiltrate Acre and find out what extent that these new cannons are capable of."

Salan nodded his head in agreement. He had witnessed the use of the cannons himself. It would appear that they were capable of great range, greater than the ability of the cannons they themselves used. However, he was aware of the utter lack of capability in the personal spy networks of the men gathered.

Unlike Germany, which had a national intelligence agency, the Byzantine and Timurid Empire relied on personal networks established by the nobility. The Strategos of the Balkans had the most extensive of these networks, but he was from a rival faction, and would not easily support the men in this room. Thus, Salan had thought of an alternative way to gain the information they needed, and he was not afraid to voice his suggestion.

"We should ask Germany to assist our operations with their intelligence. Nobody has a greater intelligence network than the Reich. I'm sure it would be easy for their agents to find out how capable these new weapons are."

The Two Strategos' had twisted expressions as they heard this. The relationship between Germany and the Byzantine Empire was a complicated one. While Berengar was an ally of Palladius, and the Byzantine Royal Family, he actively impeded the other factions who fought for control of the Empire.

These two Byzantine Generals were from the Hawkish faction that once supported Decentius, it would not be easy to make a request to the Kaiser for support. Ultimately, they could only rely on a proxy to deliver the message to them. Thus, the Strategos of Palestine voiced his opinion on the matter.

"I fear it is not so simple. Meeting with the Kaiser and making a personal request of him is not an easy task. Since the Emperor has not requested German Assistance in this war, Berengar has taken a neutral stance. At most, he is willing to provide us with military aid in the form of weapons and armor. He is only in contact with Palladius, and the Emperor himself. If we request either of them to speak with him on our behalf, then we will be asking for humiliation.

The only way to do this is to send a personal representative to the Reich, and bargain with the Kaiser for use of his agents. This will take some time, as Kufstein is far away from Jerusalem. It will take weeks just to arrive in the Reich's capital, let alone secure a meeting with the Kaiser. However, it is our best shot. After all, we can not infiltrate Acre on our own, and Germany is still technically our ally."

Of course, these men had no way of knowing that Berengar's agents had long since infiltrated every corner of Europe and the Mediterranean, and were already aware of the so called Drake Cannons in use by the Order of the Red Dragon. It was a simple matter of relaying what information they had already received to their allies.

Since they were unaware of this reality, the men present felt it was too large of a request to make, believing that Berengar would have to take additional covert actions against the Church in order to find out this information. As a result, the men would delay the time it took to receive this critical information by first sending a messenger to the Reich, hoping that they could get an audience with the Kaiser.

If they had known that Germany already had this information, all they needed to do to obtain it was dispatch a man to Constantinople, and have the German Embassy relay a telegraph to the Reich requesting access to this information.

With renewed hostilities on the horizon, every second mattered. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Byzantine and Timurid forces under-estimated Germany's capabilities, and had thus taken a longer route to discover the information they desperately required. Only time would tell if they would come to learn of the exact capabilities of the Drake Cannons before they were besieged.

Chapter 695 - It is About Retribution

Adela curled her fists in rage as she sat in her seat across from her elder sister. She could hardly believe what she was hearing. The young woman was so outraged by her husband's actions she had half a mind to leave him for good. Ava merely drank from her teacup as she listened to her little sister's enraged ramblings.

"I invite you into my home, because I took pity on you, and you thank me for my kindness by sleeping with my husband!"

Ava was not the slightest bit ashamed of her actions. Ever since she witnessed Berengar's transformation from a foolish boy to a competent lord, she had desired to ditch her husband and get with him. Truthfully, she was not expecting such a thing to occur. However, she was glad that it had. Instead, she tried to deflect from the issue by making a snide remark about a past comment.

"I don't know if you remember, but there was a time where I asked you to share him with me many years ago. If you had just said yes, then you wouldn't be so angry right now..."

Adela could no longer contain her fury. She stood up from her seat, and slapped her sister across the face as hard as she could, leaving a red handprint on the woman's pretty face. With tears in her eyes, Adela screamed the words she had wanted to say to her sister for many years.

"I hate you!"

After saying this, she stormed off from the sitting area and entered one of the castle's many rooms. Berengar generally slept with one or more of his wives in the royal bedchamber. However, it was not an everyday occurrence for all of them to share the same bed, because of this several rooms were designated for the use of the Kaiser's wives. Adela was crying on the bed she used when she was not by her husband's side. She could not believe that the man had hooked up with her sister.

Then again, the more she thought about it, the more she realized she shouldn't have trusted the man around a pretty woman. Especially if that woman was married to a man he wanted to get revenge on. With a defeated voice, she called out to nobody in particular.

"Berengar, you dummy!"

While Adela was crying alone in her room, Linde was chastising Berengar for his actions. She was actually amazed that her husband was so shameless. In the entire time she had known the man, she had never been this angry with him.

"You slept with her? What on earth compelled you to do such a stupid thing?"

Berengar listened to the woman's fury with a deadpan expression on his face. He had severely regretted his actions after doing them, knowing full well what trouble they would cause. Unfortunately, beautiful women were his weakness, especially when there was alcohol involved.

However, as the Kaiser, Berengar could not admit to his wife that what he did was wrong. No, it was not his position, but his pride that would not allow him to do so. Naturally, when pressed into a corner, and forced to explain his actions to his wife, Berengar not only doubled down, but tripled down.

"What did you expect me to do, Linde!?! That bastard Wolfgang struck our son!"

For the first time in Linde's life, she was actually furious with Berengar's womanizing, not because she cared he had slept with a random harlot, but because she was concerned about the distress such a thing would undoubtedly cause to Adela when she found out.

On top of this, the man came up with the most illogical reasoning for his actions. If he had admitted he was drunk, horny, and made a mistake she would be more lenient, however the moment she heard such obtuse reasoning for his actions she screamed at the man with every fiber of her being.

"And so you slept with his wife!?! How does that make any sense? If someone slaps our child, you cut off his hand, or have the man executed, you don't fuck his wife! Especially when that wife is the elder sister of your wife! You're unbelievable. Why don't you just admit you made a mistake?"

Berengar refused to relent, even though he was well aware of how much he had fucked up, but if he submitted to Linde now and apologized for his actions, she would never respect him in the same way she had in the past. In his past life, Berengar's father had imparted a certain phrase of wisdom unto him and that was the phrase:

"Never apologize to a woman. If you do it once, she will expect you to do it every time she thinks you are wrong..."

It was this reasoning that Berengar had utterly refused to apologize and instead asserted his dominance by questioning Linde's loyalty.

"You dare say what I, the Kaiser, can and can't do? What gives you the right? You may not understand this because you are a woman, but taking Wolfgang's life is too easy. If I did, he would just be another head on the chopping block.

If I truly want to make that imbecile understand the depths of his sins, then I must claim his wife as my own before executing him. Only then will he realize just how much he screwed up by touching my child! It's not about logic or reason, Linde, it's about retribution!"

Upon seeing that Berengar was not willing to relent, or apologize for his actions, Linde simply turned away and headed for the door. When she did so, Berengar called out to her.

"Where the hell do you think you're going!?!"

Linde turned around and gave her husband a chilling stare before responding to his words with a tongue laced with venom.

"I'm going to go comfort your wife!"

When Berengar heard this he was dumbfounded, but he supposed Linde would have a better time cheering up Adela, then he would at this point in time. After all, he refused to apologize for his actions, and Adela would not want to hear his excuses right now. Thus, Linde left Berengar alone, where he drowned his complicated emotions in copious quantities of alcohol.

Having fought with her husband, in a foolish attempt to force the man to apologize for his actions, and admit that what he did was a mistake, Linde soon found her way in the halls where she saw her son cheering up the harlot who had caused this controversy.

Linde was furious when she saw the woman in tears. There was a visible red handprint on her cheek, which Linde guessed was from Adela. She quickly called out to her son and forced him away from his aunt.

"Hans, come here this instant! I don't want you hanging around that woman!"

Hans feigned ignorance after witnessing the furious state of his mother. He had never seen the woman so outraged, and truthfully, he was a bit frightened at what she might do while in her current state. Evidently, his plan had worked, and his father had taken Ava as one of his mistresses, or else there would be no reason for his mother to be so enraged.

Still, the prince found it weird that his mother was acting this way when she was so supportive of all the other women in her husband's life. He was beginning to think that he did not understand the complexities of human romance after all. Normally, he would fight to stay by his aunt's side and comfort her, but when he saw the glare that his mother was giving him, his skeleton nearly jumped out of his skin.

Hans quickly waddled over to his mother with his head hanging low. Inadvertently, this had given away his schemes as Linde gazed at the boy's guilty state with a curious glint in her eye. She immediately grabbed hold of Hans's ear and yanked on it as she interrogated her child about his scandalous actions.

"You little brat! You did this? Didn't you!"

When Hans heard his mother's shrill voice, he nearly soiled himself. He would not deny his mother's questions when she was in such a flustered state, and merely responded with a slight nod of his head. Upon seeing the boy submissively respond to her, Linde smirked before inquiring further about his motives.

"What in God's name compelled you to do such a thing?"

Hans could not even meet his mother's glance as he tried to justify his scheming behavior.

"I only wanted everyone to be happy! I didn't think it would actually work!"

Linde felt compelled to smack her own child then and there, but instead she took a deep breath and calmed herself as she gazed upon the boy's cute face. She couldn't stay mad at the boy, even though what he had done had caused her quite the headache. However, his actions would not go unpunished. She quickly dished out a sentence for her son as a reprisal for his delinquent actions.

"You are confined to your room for the next two weeks. Aside from school and the Cadet Corps, you are not allowed to leave your quarters until I say so! Shame on you, messing with the heads of adults! I hope that you will reflect on your actions and the trouble you have caused. I will also be expecting a thorough report on why you thought it was necessary to act as a matchmaker between your father and your aunt!"

Hans immediately protested his mother's decision. He felt the extent that his mother was disciplining him was unjust. The punishment clearly did not fit the crime. Or so he thought. However, under the frightful gaze of his enraged mother, the boy could not fully voice his argument against the sentence she had given him, and merely responded with a childish quip.

"That's not fair!"

Linde was not in the mood to hear the boy's excuses. She quickly grabbed hold of her son's hand and dragged him to his room while continuing to lecture him.

"You have no idea the trouble you have caused by manipulating your aunt and Father. You should consider yourself lucky that you are only grounded for two weeks. It is clear that your father and I have given you too much freedom. From now on, things are going to be much more strict around here!"

After saying this, Linde tossed her son into his room and locked the door behind him. Truthfully, it was not exactly the worst punishment in the world. Hans's room was larger than most penthouse suites,

with its own bathroom, desk, and library. The most difficult portion of his punishment would be writing a report to his mother, explaining the reasoning for his schemes. He did not know how he would logically explain his reason for wanting Ava as another one of his mommies.

Linde, on the other hand, would proceed to Adela's quarters, not worrying in the slightest about Ava who witnessed the entire scene display itself, and was dreadfully confused about what had been said. If Ava was foolish enough to be manipulated by a child, then Linde would not bother spending the effort to explain it to her. As for Adela, she was still crying her pretty little face into her pillow. The news that her sister had seduced her husband devastated her.

Chapter 696 - Itami Riyo's Internal Strife

Itami Riyo lies asleep on a futon. It was one of the earliest inventions she had brought into this world. She slept comfortably, naked beneath her futon. It was a habit of hers in both her past life and this one. The main reason was comfortability. She did not enjoy being tangled in clothing while she slept.

In her family's lands, the Imperial Japanese Army maintained their vigilance. Though the rebels were defeated, and their leaders captured. It did not mean that they would not launch a counterattack. As for Itami's family, they were asleep in their own chambers. After getting into an argument with her mother, the woman had spent much of her stay in the region avoiding her family.

She could only tolerate so much of her mother's antics. Though she enjoyed the company of her sister, the girl was a bit too clingy. Even now, Riyo had to keep one eye open in case the girl snuck into her bed. Naturally, the moment the door to her room opened, Riyo reached for her sword and unsheathed it, before pointing her blade directly in front of her little sister's cute face.

Momo gazed at her sister's vicious expression of indifference. She was not the slightest bit frightened by Riyo. This was how the two of them normally behaved under such circumstances. Instead, she merely knocked her own head with her tiny fist and stuck out her tongue while mocking her elder sister.

"It looks like I've been found out..."

Riyo sighed before sheathing her blade, where she shook her head. She was not the slightest bit uncomfortable being naked around her own sister. Instead, she was exhausted by the girls' overly affectionate behavior.

"What do you want, Momo?"

The girl instantly smiled before shutting the door behind her and disrobing herself. With an innocent expression, she expressed her desire.

"I just wanted to sleep with nee-chan!"

Riyo gazed upon her sister's naked body, and her pupils shrunk. Just what the hell was her mother feeding this girl? She was several years younger, and still going through development, and yet the girl was curvier than she was. It was at this moment that a sense of embarrassment finally overtook Riyo's mind as she covered her own naked body with her hands before scolding her sister.

"What are you doing? You can't just strip down in my room and share my futon!"

Momo looked up at her sister with a confused expression before asking why she couldn't do such a thing?

"Huh? But you always sleep naked nee-chan? Why can't I?"

Riyo could not help but knock the girl on the head for her lack of a brain before scolding her.

"Idiot! It's one thing to sleep naked on your own, but you can't do it with another person! Especially not your sister. That's taboo!"

It was at this moment that Riyo reached into her belongings and dressed herself in a loose silk kimono, before urging her sister to do the same.

"It can't be helped. If you're going to sleep with your sister, get dressed!"

Momo silently clapped her hands in excitement before doing as she was instructed. After getting dressed in her clothes once more, she crawled into the futon with her elder sister, and snuggled with her.

"Nee-chan is the best!"

Riyo flushed with embarrassment in the darkness when she heard these words. She looked away from her sister, in case the girl's keen eyesight took notice. It was at this moment that Momo voiced a similar question to what her mother had asked upon her arrival.

"Hey, Nee-chan? Is there really no man in your life?"

Riyo became even more flustered as she heard her little sister ask such a shameless question. She could not help but wonder why the girl was so interested in her love life.

"Why do you care?"

Momo looked up at her sister's flushed face before asking with an innocent expression on her face.

"I'm just curious. I know you never thought of any boys while you were living here, and once you went off to war, I was sure that you would find someone. You're so beautiful and brave. I was certain someone would chase you. Yet, you told Okaa-san you weren't interested in anyone unless they could defeat you. Does that mean you haven't met anyone yet?"

Riyo sighed heavily as she reflected on the question. In this life, all the men she had met were lacking in some way or another. However, that did not mean she was single in her past life like Berengar was. Shortly after Julian's death, Riyo fell into a deep depression, and was only lifted from her despair because of one of her commanding officers. The two of them dated in secret, until another soldier found out about it, and killed her in an act of jealousy.

However, thinking back on that man's name and face, she realized that she could remember neither. It was almost as if he was simply a substitute for the man she had really longed for. A dense fool who had gotten himself fragged in the last days of a twenty-year conflict. She accidentally let the name slip as she thought about her past life.

"Julian, you dummy..."

This instantly startled Momo. The name Julian was foreign to her. She had never heard the name before. Hell, it was even difficult for her to pronounce, so how did her sister manage to say it so clearly? If she wasn't so sure that Riyo was talking about a man, she would have thought the girl was speaking gibberish. There were many questions on the girl's mind, chiefly among them was:

"Who is Jurian?"

Momo had a difficult time pronouncing the letter L like many Japanese who were not accustomed to the English tongue. Riyo gazed at her sister with an astonished expression on her face. She only now realized that she had voiced her thoughts aloud. She tried to come up with an excuse but utterly failed to do so.

"Ummm... that's kind of difficult to explain... Just know that he was someone very dear to your nee-chan."

This only made Momo more curious about the mysterious man's identity. She was quick to inquire about this person. In her entire life, Momo had never known her sister to care for a man before.

"What do you mean was? Is he okay?"

Riyo shook her head with a solemn expression on her face before telling her sister the truth.

"No, he is not... He died many years ago, but it's okay, I have gotten over it..."

Momo did not believe her sister for a single second as she heard this. She puffed her cheeks in defiance before scolding Riyo for not being honest with herself.

"It sounds to me like you're still hung up on him. Clearly, whoever he was, you are using him as a standard to judge other men, or as an excuse to stay away from them. It sounds like you still need to do some healing..."

Riyo was shocked by this statement. She gazed at her little sister with a hint of surprise on her face, before making a joke.

"Who are you, and what have you done with my foolish little sister?"

Momo pouted once more while she pounded her tiny fists against Riyo's shoulder.

"Nee-chan! I'm being serious!"

Riyo sighed as she stroked the girl's jet black hair. She had nothing more she wanted to say on the matter and forced the girl to get some sleep.

"Go to sleep Momo, dawn is closer than you think..."

After saying this, the woman ignored her younger sister and her protests. Eventually the Momo fell asleep. However, Riyo's consciousness lingered for some time, fearful that she may have let her sister know something that she shouldn't have.

What would happen if the girl had informed their mother of what she had said? Things would not end well for her if that old vixen found out that she was still stuck on some guy who died a long time ago. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he would die many years in the future.

Eventually, Riyo drifted into sleep, dreaming about her past life, and how easy her life was back then, especially when compared to this brutal world of warfare and intrigue. She was relieved to know that, at least in her dreams, she could still hear his voice and see his face.

Chapter 697 - Taking ownership

Linde stood in the door-way of Adela's quarters. She gazed upon the scene of the young woman sobbing profusely after realizing that her husband had slept with her sister. If the relationship was more cordial between the two siblings, then perhaps she would have been less wounded. However, things were complicated between Adela and Ava. Not only was Ava's Berengar's first fiancée, but she was someone who had always looked down on Adela.

Berengar did not sleep with Ava to hurt Adela. It was not a deliberate act of cruelty. To him, it was a matter of retribution against Wolfgang. Had Ava not come onto him, he never would have considered it a viable option. Alcohol played its own part in his neglectful thinking.

Though Linde enjoyed playing with Honoria and Adela, she was committed to her relationship with Berengar, and though he had played the part of the fool with his recent actions, she desired nothing more than to reunite Adela and Berengar, and thus she had come to smoothe things over with the girl. After all, she could never expect Berengar to apologize for his behavior.

Linde approached the petite figure of Adela, who had her head face down on the pillows and patted her back gently. The sudden action caused the girl to react in shock, where she turned around and saw Linde smiling warmly at her. Immediately Adela buried her head in the woman's bosom and cried even more.

"Linde.... Berengar slept with my sister!"

Linde shushed the girl as she stroked her silky golden hair. She sighed heavily before trying to comfort her oldest rival in her time of need.

"Yeah... I heard... Berengar is an idiot, but he had his reasons..."

Adela gazed up with a hint of fury in her sapphire eyes as she scolded Linde for taking their husband's side.

"Why are you taking his side? You know what he did was wrong!"

Linde did not deny that she felt conflicted over choosing Berengar's side, especially after having such choice words for the man. However, she did not hesitate to respond to Adela's statement.

"Do you know the full story? Your sister's idiot husband struck Hans in an act of petty rage. He has since been arrested and is now awaiting his execution. Ava became hysterical after her husband's arrest, and Hans, fearing for her safety, convinced her to beg for Berengar's forgiveness. You know how Berengar is with his fury. If Ava did not do anything, she was likely to suffer as well.

Of course, the moment this news reached his ear, our dear husband resorted to drinking. After all, that seems to be his method of coping with stress. Taking advantage of this fact, your sister forced herself on

him. Believing it to be an opportune moment to further punish Wolfgang before his execution, Berengar did not resist.

I don't believe there are actually any feelings between Berengar and your sister. It will probably be a one-off thing. I can tell he deeply regrets it now that he has had some time to think through the situation. You should take some time to sort through your thoughts and come to realize that this is the price you have to pay for being with a man like Berengar.

Our husband is the most wealthy, and powerful man in the world, and is handsome to boot. Women around the globe will inevitably throw themselves at him, and sometimes he will fail to resist the temptation to take advantage of it. I'm not mad that Berengar slept with your sister. I'm angry that he did not take the time to think about what effect it would have on you.

If there is one thing that keeps getting in the way between yours and Berengar's happiness, it is your jealousy. If you want to keep him by your side, I suggest you take a more lax attitude on how he handles his relationships with other women. As you know, under German law, he is permitted another wife, and a man like him won't leave that slot open. READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT FREEWEBNOVEL.COM ONLY.

I'm not saying that woman is going to be Ava, but you need to realize that being jealous of the next woman he brings home is not going to do you any favors. I hope the two of you can move past this, and if you need a shoulder to cry on, I am here for you."

After hearing Linde's long-winded speech, Adela wiped the tears from her eyes. It was true she did not know the whole story. Ava had just blatantly said the words "I slept with Berengar" to her. Naturally, Adela denied it at first, but based upon the love bite on the woman's neck, she knew it to be true. Afterward, she just flipped out, not even listening to reason. Not that Ava had the brains to properly explain her actions to her sister.

Upon hearing Linde explain the full situation to her, and also add in her personal advice. Adela was able to calm herself, at least to the extent that she was not overflowing with tears anymore. Still, she was angry at Berengar.

That idiot did not even take a moment to think of how his actions might affect his loved ones. She was beginning to think there was something seriously wrong with the way the man's brain worked. It was as if empathy was an alien emotion to him. Something that did not register in his brain.

Upon seeing that Adela had calmed herself to some extent, Linde hugged the woman tightly in her arms. While the two were enjoying the moment, a knock resounded on the door to reveal Berengar standing in the doorway. He had chosen the opportune moment to enter. Still, Adela was glaring daggers at him. He had a tray of blended drinks in his hands as he realized the best way to get through their troubles was to talk about it.

Linde was quick to accept her drink and decided to stay out of whatever Berengar had to say. Adela, on the other hand, was hesitant but after some insistence by the others, she sighed and took a sip from her drink, allowing Berengar to say his piece. Once the three of them had some alcohol in their blood, Berengar sighed heavily before making his statement.

"I'm not going to apologize for what I have done, simply because I don't believe it was wrong. Under the same circumstances, I'm certain I would do it again."

Adela was just about to pour her drink on his head when Berengar waved his finger and stopped her before continuing on with his speech.

"However, I will say that I lament the fact that my actions hurt you. I know the relationship between you and Ava is strenuous, to say the least. I should have informed you of my decision before doing it. Wolfgang did something unforgiveable, something not even his life could truly pay for. Ava approached me, and I knew the best way to get back at him was to steal her from him before his death. Then, and only then, would I have been satisfied.

I want you to know that I have no intentions of seeing your sister long term, nor do I plan on raising her children. I'm sure somebody else can fulfill that role. Since things have become so strained between the two of you, I will move her into the old family castle, where she and her family will be properly looked after, until a time where she can meet a man who will provide for her.

So long as I can remember, I have never had feelings for your sister, and that hasn't changed. She has always been and will always be a pain in my ass. However, I feel justified in what I did, as once your sister's infidelity is revealed to her husband, he will be in incredible pain, and then, after he has lost all hope, I will take his head.

This also will serve as a warning to all who seek to do harm to my family. If you dare to touch a hair on my children's heads, I won't just kill you. I will fuck your wife before doing so. That's all I wanted to say. Take as much time as you need to get over this. I'll be waiting for you when you are ready to come back into my arms."

After saying this, Berengar stood up and left, leaving Adela in a conflicted state. She honestly did not know how she was going to get over this. Meanwhile, Linde gazed upon her husband's back as he left the room with a smug smirk on her pretty face, muttering under her breath a single phrase.

"You sly dog..."

She was amazed at the man's ability to simultaneously take ownership of his actions while still refusing to apologize in a way that seemed somewhat endearing. He was an asshole for doing what he did, there was no denying it. However, he was a charming asshole, and the man she loved. Had he actually bowed down and grovelled to Adela in order to gain her forgiveness, Linde would have been internally disgusted by his actions.

However, Berengar had exceeded her expectations, and because of this, she was quite turned on. If only Adela wasn't in such a miserable state, she would have taken this opportunity to run after her man and see how much stamina he had left over after his little affair.

Chapter 698 - You are not a Woman I Love

Immediately after Berengar had concluded his business with Adela, he sought out Ava, who was still sitting in the spot she was previously been in. The woman was in disbelief. No matter how much she abused Adela in the past, the girl had never said the words "I hate you!" so seriously before. She was beginning to question every decision she had ever made. Berengar noticed the depressed expression on the woman's face, but was unmoved. He sat down beside his sister-in-law and immediately gained her attention.

"Ava, we need to talk..."

Ava gazed over at Berengar, and immediately tried to hug him, believing he would be a shoulder to cry on. However, the man pushed her away with a stern reaction on his face. This initially shocked her, but she did not give it any thought, and instead nodded her head obediently, signalling the man to speak.

"Wolfgang will be given a stay of execution for the time being. Though he is still guilty of assaulting a member of the Royal Family, and by extension treason. I will not have him executed until after I have received permission from his younger brother, Adelbrand. The last thing I need is one of my most capable Generals to turn against me.

I will send word to Adelbrand, and have him visit me personally before I decide on how to proceed with Wolfgang. If Adelbrand begs me to spare Wolfgang's life, I will exile the man to the Colonies, to start anew and live a life of backbreaking labor. If this is the case, then your marriage shall be annulled on the grounds of your infidelity, and you will be granted custody over your children."

All the grief Ava had felt in her heart since Adela had spurned her instantly vanished. It was all worth it if she could get away from Wolfgang and enter Berengar's good graces. She immediately tried to hug and kiss Berengar but was stopped before she could do so. He did not wait for her response and immediately continued on his speech.

"As for what happened between you and me, it was a mistake. I will not continue our relationship until Adela comes to accept it. For now, I will politely ask you to remove yourself and your family from my Palace. I will not, however, send you to the streets, even if Adela was to insist. Instead, I will allow you and your children to stay in my family's old castle. You and your offspring will be looked after appropriately, and you shall not want for anything.

If Adela comes to accept our relationship, then I will not mind visiting you once in a while, and having intimate relations with you. However, I will not be the father that your children need. I already have my own family, and your children with Wolfgang will never be mine. If you do not desire such a relationship, then you can look for another man to marry, and whatever relationship we have will come to an end. The choice is entirely yours to make."

Ava was stunned when she heard this news. She thought that she had finally gotten into Berengar's good graces, when in reality she was merely used on a whim, and was being discarded afterward. Ava could not believe the man was being so shameless after what he said to her at their intimate moment. She immediately questioned his integrity.

"What if I become pregnant with your child? Are you so heartless to toss me, and our child, away?"

In response to this, Berengar had a stoic expression on his face as he gave the woman an answer. He did not like her attitude and was close to backhanding her.

"If you bear my child, then I will be a semi-active part in its life. I will not, however, recognize it as my own. It will have no claim to my throne and will be nothing more than a bastard. As for your other children, I have already made my stance clear on that."

The mature beauty had a complicated expression on her face. This was not at all what she was expecting after she had slept with the Kaiser. Why was she the odd one out? Though she did not expect to be married to the man, she at least anticipated the same treatment that Henrietta received.

Instead, she cast away like a leper. Ava's vindictive nature took hold of her as she thought about Berengar's relationship with his sister, and immediately threatened to expose his secret if he did not take her and her children in.

"I know what goes on between you and your sister. I wouldn't doubt if one of your so-called heirs is really hers. If you don't take care of me properly, then maybe I'll just tell somebody about the taboo relationship you have with your sister!"

Though Berengar was being threatened by the woman, he did not immediately lash out at her, and instead chided her for her naivety.

"Henrietta is my aunt by blood. From a consanguineous standpoint, our relationship is no different from the one I have with your sister. If it were not because of political importance tied to my last marriage slot, I would have made this knowledge public, and married her.

Go ahead and tell others. I will simply make the truth available to everyone. The voice of the crown is much larger than yours. You have no power over me, and to think that you do just shows how foolish you are. If I were a more heartless man, I would have you join your husband for making that threat to me just now.

You really are your husband's wife. You know what I do to those who threaten me, and yet you so boldly try to blackmail me in my house, under my supervision, with no witnesses. Sometimes I wonder if you are really Otto's daughter. You lack both the brains and grace that most of your family has."

Ava immediately realized how foolish she was and bowed her head in apology.

"Please, forgive me, my Kaiser..."

Berengar sighed heavily as he thought about whether he should entertain such a boorish woman. Then again, he remembered how good it felt to stick his shaft between her legs, and decided to show mercy to the fool.

"I suppose I now have at least one fond memory of you. Because of that, I will spare you, and pretend like this minor incident had never occurred. However, threaten me again and you will see how merciless I can truly be."

Ava did not question Berengar anymore after this. She accepted her fate. After all, life in a lavish castle was still better than what awaited her with Wolfgang. Perhaps she could convince her sister to approve of her relationship with Berengar. If she could, her days would be filled with luxury and pleasure, even if there was no love between her and the Kaiser.

After all, she couldn't get the feeling she had when she was physically joined together with Berengar out of her mind. It was always lingering there, reminding her of what could be. Once the woman was more docile, Berengar sighed and stood up from his seat. He departed from the room with one final bit of advice.

"I will give you a week to inform your children about the changes that are about to occur in their lives. This gives me time to find a trustworthy staff to look after you and your family in the old castle. After that, I will have your things moved, and you will no longer be welcome in the palace as a guest of your sister's. Do not show up at my gates unannounced, or you will be turned away.

As for whether or not our fun can continue, that is up for your sister to decide. Normally I would just do as I please in pursuit of a woman I'm fond of. However, you are not a woman that I love and to call you a mistress would be an insult to my sister. Whether our relationship involves into anything more than a passing fancy is up for you and Adela to decide."

With that said, Berengar turned away from Ava and went on his own path. Ava would try to reconcile with her sister shortly after, but would ultimately be turned away by the girl. For the time being, she would not be able to remotely convince Adela of accepting her affair with Berengar.

Chapter 699 Arrival of the Indian Exiles Part I

Months had passed since the day Berengar had turned Ava away and currently, two children were on a train heading towards Kufstein. One of these two kids was the Emperor of the Anangpur Empire, who had spent the last few months travelling on a treacherous journey towards the German Empire. By his side was his younger sister Priya, who gazed out the window of the strange vehicle known as a "train" with an astonished expression on her face.

Compared to the condition she was in when she first set out on this journey, she was much better. The girl was no longer on the brink of death, having not consumed the poison her uncle had prepared for her in months. Her complexion, while pale, was showing signs of her normal hue. She was still frail, but could now walk on her own, at least a certain distance.

Unlike the normal guests to the Royal Palace of Kufstein, these two children were in a standard coach seat. They were travelling incognito, and could not very well afford to buy a first-class cabin. By their side was the merchant who their cousin Ishwar had paid to bring them to their destination. Until now, they believed they had gone unnoticed. In reality, Linde's agents had long since marked them as persons of interest, and had even staved off a few assassination attempts from their uncle in secret.

There was a reason they were so easily able to get through German customs. Even the merchant found it strange. Normally, foreign traders had to go to great lengths to get into the Reich. If it were not the central trade hub of Europe, they would not bother doing it. However, the moment the man presented his identification papers to the Trade and immigration officials at the Hungarian border, his cargo was only briefly searched for contraband before being approved.

The guards only took a short glimpse of the identification papers that had been prepared for the two children. Unless one was a routine traveler to the lands of the Reich, they would be interrogated at extensive length about what they were carrying, the identities of everyone who accompanied them, and the reason for their visit.

With the recent expansions in Border security, there were only a few ways to safely enter the Reich, and the pathways were covered with refugees and merchants alike. Even now, the merchant was a bit unsettled by how easy it was for him to sneak the kids into the Empire. Dharya and Priya were blissfully

unaware of these uncertainties, and instead, Priya gazed out the window with a radiant smile, asking her brother questions about all the wonders she had witnessed.

"Brother, what is that? Can you see it? It's moving! All on its own! Where are the horses pulling it?"

What the young girl was referring to was a steam powered tractor which had long since replaced animal driven machines as agricultural tools in the fields of Austria. The farmer was pulling a seeder plow through his fields via his tractor with a cheerful smile on his face. Agriculture was a continual focus of Berengar's interests. Believing that no family should ever go hungry, he tried his best to make food plentiful, affordable, and healthy.

Compared to the Anangpur Empire, where much of the agriculture was done by hand, this was truly a marvelous sight, especially for the little girl who had been confined to the Palace for most of her life. The truth of the matter was, Dharya knew very little about the mysterious German Empire, only what he had heard from his cousin Ishwar.

Hell, he was unaware that Austria had created an Empire until the moment he set foot on his journey. How could he possibly know what that tractor was? Unfortunately, due to the story he frequently told Priya while she was alone and sick, the girl believed he was an expert on the subject. Thus, he could only grimace as he admitted his ignorance to the wide eyed little girl.

"I'm sorry Priya, I don't know the answer to that..."

The girl's expression saddened as she realized she would not get an answer, despite being truly interested in the magnificent device. As if taking pity on the girl, after spending months looking after her, the old merchant broke his silence.

"That device there is called a tractor. I don't have the damndest clue about how it operates, but it is a major tool of German agriculture. It is capable of doing the work of dozens of beasts and hundreds of men. The device attached to its back is known as the seeder plow and is used to both plow and seed the fields.

Only one man is required to ensure the devices are loaded. After that, he simply sits back and drives the tractor across his plot of land that he wishes to sow. This device is a large reason why Austria is currently known as the breadbasket of the Reich. During my last visit, these things were rare as the technology had just been developed. It would appear that now such tools are commonplace."

Dharya had a mind for politics and immediately understood what this meant. His curiosity got the better of him, and he quickly asked the man the most pertinent question on his mind.

"If so, few hands are needed in the fields, then where did all the peasants go?" FREEWEBNOVEL.COM

The merchant smiled before informing the exiled Emperor of Anangpur and his little sister of how far advanced Germany was compared to their homeland.

"The reich has no peasants, sure there are farmers, but as you can see, they are fewer than anywhere else I have visited. Instead, the former peasant class is free to work in whatever field they desire. So long as one is capable enough in the reich, they can rise to a lofty position without ever being born in the nobility. It is the reason you see so many people at the borders trying their best to get in.

Of course, the Germans are a proud folk. They take only a few foreigners into their lands. Mostly young women, capable of being wives and mothers, and they insist these women marry German men, and their offsprings marry Germans. Which they are more than willing to do if it means escaping the lives that await them in their homelands.

It has been a while since I last visited this part of the world, but it appears the Germans are preparing for a major war against their neighbors. The last time I was here, these extensive border defenses did not exist. Heck, it was still known as the Kingdom of Austria back then."

Priya was instantly curious about how rapidly this land had transitioned and the cause for it. The merchant appeared to be a reliable source of information, and thus she quickly asked for more information.

"How did the Kingdom of Austria become the German Empire, and why is the name not the Austrian Empire?"

The old man sighed, before shaking his head, sadly he had to admit that his knowledge was limited.

"Unfortunately, I am not the best man to ask that question. I only know the things I know due to the contacts I have in the Byzantine Empire. They are a major trading partner, an ally of the Reich."

The girl began to pout once more, and upon seeing this, the man felt his heart break. So he decided to speak about what little he knew.

"I will tell you the rumors I have heard, but I cannot guarantee their accuracy. This Empire is ruled by a man known as Berengar von Kufstein. Supposedly seven years ago, he was nothing more than a minor nobleman's firstborn son.

Apparently, he developed some strange technology that allowed him to mass produce steel. He became exceptionally wealthy very quickly. Berengar tried to stay out of matters of politics, but it would appear his neighbors had other plans. He quickly got into a few small-scale wars and climbed the ranks of the noble hierarchy by defeating his enemies.

After a series of victories, he found himself the King of an Independent Austria. Where he was universally despised by his neighbors. Despite this, his realm continued to flourish, and his military might expand. Through diplomacy, he brought some of his neighbors to his side to untie with him. The rest he conquered. In the end, he unified the majority of the German world. With a few small areas still in the hands of his neighbors.

Apparently, the Kaiser had grand ideals about unifying his people into a powerful empire, and hence he named it the German Empire, rather than the Austrian Empire. Even if the Kingdom of Austria is the one responsible for uniting the Empire.

The story of Berengar von Kufstein is interesting. Depending on who you ask, he is either a Saint or a Devil. To the German people, he is a benevolent monarch, leading them into a new and prosperous era. To the neighboring people, he is a blood-thirsty tyrant, and a heretic, who seeks to establish his rule over all.

I'm just an old merchant from the east, and all I know about Germany is that trading with the Empire is safe and stable. The Germans are the wealthiest people in the world and are willing it import luxuries

from across the world to satiate their expensive tastes. Aside from the difficulties of actually getting into the country, I have no complaints.

The German military and Police forces go to great lengths to secure the realm's borders. You will not find highwaymen, or bandits in the Empire, nor will you find street gangs. Violent crimes are heavily punished, and criminal enterprises that prey on the people are eradicated.

The German people live in a state of peace and prosperity, unlike anywhere else in the world. Even if the old nobility wanted to rise against their new monarch, they would find no volunteers to do so. Your cousin chose wisely to send you to Kufstein. You will be safe from your uncle here."

After hearing this speech, the two siblings were much more confident in their odds of surviving here in Germany. Who knows, perhaps they could even convince the Kaiser to take up their cause, and restore Dharya to power on his throne.

Chapter 700 Arrival of the Indian Exiles Part II

The train eventually arrived in Kufstein, where the two Indian exiles departed from its steps alongside their handler, who had helped them on the journey this far. The man took one last good look at the two children before pointing them in the palace's direction.

"If you follow this road, you will enter the Palace District. You should be able to tell which building the Kaiser lives in because of its overwhelming size and grandeur. When you approach the gates, hand this letter to the guards. Your Cousin Ishwar has already scheduled a diplomatic visit with the Kaiser.

This letter contains the approval by the Crown of Germany for your visit. They should allow you access to the Palace. However, don't be surprised if they treat you with some suspicion. After all, you there are only the two of you, and they should be expecting a more grand delegation.

I'm afraid this is where we part ways. It has been an honor to serve you, your highness. Rest assured, so long as I draw breath, I will not say a word about your journey to anyone."

Dharya gazed up at the man with a bitter smile on his face and nodded his head before grabbing hold of his sister's hand. He would act as her support as the two of them travelled to the Royal Palace. He thanked the man for the assistance he had provided them during these past few months.

"Thank you Ranjan, I will remember the help you have given me and my sister. When I return to the Empire and reclaim my rightful throne, I will ensure that you are well rewarded for your efforts!"

The Merchant smiled as he heard these words and bowed his head before departing.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime..."

After saying this, he disappeared into the crowd of people gathered outside the station. Since the man was in Kufstein; he intended to take advantage of the lucrative market to bring back some wares to the Anangpur Empire. There were many things that could only be purchased in Germany's capital. Things that would fetch an enormous price back home.

As for the two siblings, they walked together while holding hands towards the Palace district. Due to the fact that they were obviously foreigners, there were plenty of people who gazed in astonishment at

their bronze complexions. Kufstein usually only had merchants from foreign countries. It was rare to see children from the east in the Capital.

Dharya paid no mind and instead led his sister carefully through the streets. The girl gazed in wonder at the myriad of stores that existed across the trade district. This was no open bazaar, but an outdoor shopping mall filled with shops that contained every item money could buy.

She gazed at the lavish fashion designs that adorned mannequins in the windows of shops and desired to wear such pretty dresses. The girl pointed towards them with an ecstatic expression and spoke to her brother with an energetic tone.

"Dharya, look! Aren't they pretty?"

The boy emperor was too focused on ensuring their safety to bother with the girl's statement and merely nodded his head in silence. His lack of care for the girl's interests made her pout in discontent. Eventually, after making their way through the massive trade district, the two siblings found their way into the palace district, and in front of the gates of the Kaiser's residence.

By now, Priya had lost the energy in her legs and was being carried on her elder brother's back. When the Imperial Guards saw the approach of the two children, they were cautious while they issued their orders.

"Halt! This is the residence of the Kaiser. None shall pass without an invitation!"

Luckily, the boy had spent the months of his journey learning the German language, and thus he was able to understand what these guards were saying. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the letter, and handed it over to the men who read it carefully.

The letter was from the Office of the Crown and approved the Indian Delegation for a visit. It contained the Kaiser's signature and seal. The only surprising thing was that this was no standard delegation, but two small children. This baffled the guards, causing the non-commissioned officer to take the letter into his hands and carefully study it. After some deliberation, he issued orders to the guards.

"Detain them, and search them for any weapons or contraband. I will verify the authenticity of this document. If it is legitimate, they can proceed to the Palace under an armed escort. If not, they will face the justice of the crown for falsifying documents."

After saying this, the sergeant rushed towards the Palace with the document in hand. As for the other guards, they did as they were instructed and thoroughly inspected the two children for smuggled weapons or other means of contraband.

Dharya did not resist, instead he was impressed with the level of security the Kaiser had at his disposal. There was an entire battalion of the Imperial Guard whose sole duty was to protect the royal palace. The gates to the Palace complex were fortified, with heavy walls in the form of a star fortress. Atop these walls were all the armaments that would come with such fortifications.

One could say that the Royal Palace of Germany was actually a stronghold in its own right. It took some time, but eventually the Sergeant returned to the gates, having ascertained the validity of the document he personally led the two children inside.

"Apologies for the wait, however, it is not every day that children visit the Kaiser. We had to ensure that everything was legitimate before allowing you entry. Please follow me. The Kaiser is waiting for you in the Great Hall."

Dharya nodded his head and carried Priya with him. Though the soldiers offered to get her a stroller, the boy was adamant about looking after his own sister. The two children gazed in wonder at the baroque architecture of the Austrian Palace, and the elaborate cobblestone road that led to its entrance. They could hardly believe such grand feats of architecture had been achieved. However, when they thought about everything they had witnessed, since coming to Germany, it was not too surprising.

Eventually they reached the Great Hall where Berengar was seated on his throne, with his wife Linde by his side. Dharya gazed upon the beautiful figure of the redheaded woman with a sense of wonder in his eyes. He had never seen such a gorgeous woman before in his life.

As for Priya, she blushed when she saw the handsome visage of the golden-haired man seated on the throne. His imperial regalia and all the honors he had won in warfare adorned his body. He was the truest definition of a monarch. Berengar gazed upon the two guests with a stoic expression. Before Dharya could introduce himself, he spoke up and shocked the boy..

"So you are the boy emperor of the Anangpur empire, and you must be its Princess. I have been expecting you for some time. I also know about your sister's condition. If you don't mind, I would like to have my physician attend to her immediately.

Poison is some nasty business, and the fact that your uncle would force such cruelty on a young girl is beyond despicable. Rest assured, so long as you are within my domain you will be safe from that fiend's plots."

Dharya was hesitant to be parted from Priya, and upon seeing this, Berengar reassured the boy as he boasted about the capabilities of his doctors.

"Believe me when I say you will find no greater practitioners of medicine in this world, then here in Kufstein. I promise you that my doctors will do their best to treat her. Please, if she is this ill after having been several months without the poison, then time is of the essence."

Priya silently nodded to Dharya, giving him permission to send her off to the German physician. With this, Berengar silently motioned for his guards to carry the girl to the infirmary. Dharya immediately bowed his head and thanked the German Kaiser for his kindness.

"Thank you..."

Berengar acted humbly as he motioned for the boy to rise before speaking his piece.

"No need to thank me. I am merely doing what I can to save an innocent life. It is my physicians that you should be the thanking. The discoveries they have made this past decade put the rest of the world to shame. Without their diligent work in improving the field of medicine, I would have lost someone very dear to me.

We have a lot to discuss, however I am certain that you must be weary from your journey. My maids will bring you towards your quarters. They will take care of you during your stay in Kufstein. After you have

bathed and dressed, we will meet up in the dining hall where I will treat you to my Empire's cuisine. I am sure you will enjoy it."

After saying this, Dharya bowed his head and thanked Berengar once more before departing to his allotted quarters.

"I thank you for your benevolence."

With this, the first interaction between the Kaiser of Germany and the boy emperor of northwestern India was complete. As for how Priya's condition fared, only time would tell.