

# Steel 711

Chapter 711 Who are you and what have you done with my wife?

As Berengar waited for his messenger to meet with the Monarch of the Kalmar Union, he was involved in the endless pile of paperwork that always seemed to find its way to his desk. The Kaiser signed away documents at an efficient rate while the sound of knocking appeared from the other side of his office's door. This halted his current actions as he called out to the intruder with an exasperated tone in his voice.

"It's open!"

With this said, the doors swung open to reveal the figure of someone that Berengar was not expecting. Adela had a stern expression on her face as she approached her husband and sat down on the chair across from his desk. The fact that she was even speaking to Berengar after what he had done was a good sign.

Berengar remained silent, as he had already spoken his piece about his affair with the woman's sister, and had nothing more to say to her. This only further agitated Adela, as she glared at the man intensely for several seconds before sighing heavily and speaking the exact words that her husband was expecting.

"I forgive you..."

A wry smile formed on Berengar's lips as he teased his pretty wife in a taunting manner.

"I'm sorry I didn't quite hear that. You what?"

Adela could feel the irritation rising in her soul as she stood up from her seat and shouted at the man she loved.

"I forgive you, okay!?!"

Berengar merely chuckled when he heard this before petting the young woman on her golden head. She pouted as he did so, which only made her seem cuter in the eyes of her husband. Berengar sighed heavily before retracting his hand. His expression turned stern as he addressed Adela's statement.

"So, what did we learn?"

The petite young blonde woman was practically scowling as she heard this. Did this man really have the nerve to lecture her after what he had done? However, she remembered the words Linde had spoken to her during her grief, and remembered her place as one of many partners of her husband. Adela made sure to enunciate every word clearly so that she would no longer be teased by the man sitting across from her.

"I shouldn't be jealous... You will probably have more mistresses in the future because you have multiple wives. I should have acted more calmly when I heard you had slept with my sister..."

Berengar smiled pleasantly and nodded his head before petting the girl's hair once more. This time she fought it off, as she was too embarrassed to endure the treatment. Seeing how cute she was being, Berengar could not stop himself from teasing his wife further.

"Good girl..."

When Adela heard this, she practically cursed her husband with her own mind. Seeing she was still rebellious, Berengar sighed before speaking about their relationship.

"You know, if you had just let go of your petty jealousy years ago, we could have moved past this whole mess. I understand it was difficult for you to do that, so I appreciate the effort you have gone through to make me happy. So I suppose the question is, what should be done about your sister?"

Adela was startled when she realized Berengar was asking for her input. She thought about it for several moments before bringing up the most important part of the equation.

"What happens to Wolfgang?"

In response to this, Berengar pulled out two chalices and poured some wine into them. He handed one off to his wife, while taking a sip from his own.

"I have given Wolfgang a stay of execution until I can consult with his brother Adelbrand about his punishment. Normally, the man and I would have spoken by now, but he is currently bogged down with affairs in Iberia. Apparently, he deems his brother's life as less important than his current campaign against the rebels. To quote the message I received:

Let the bastard rot in the dungeons. I will visit Kufstein when I have the time to discuss a more permanent solution to his crimes."

It shocked Adela to hear how little Adelbrand cared for his own flesh and blood, but after everything that happened during the Bavarian invasion of Austria years ago, it would be hard to forgive the man. She sighed heavily when she heard this. It sounded like Adelbrand was inclined to agree with Berengar's suggestion of execution.

After realizing that her sister would be a widow with four kids to feed, Adela felt pity for the woman. She did not know what exactly Berengar had done with her after the incident and quickly asked about her current condition.

"And my sister?"

Berengar took another drink from his wine before answering the question with a stoic expression on his face.

"For the time being, she is being looked after in the old castle, where she and her children are free to live as they please. I have informed her I won't be a father to her children, and that if I were to see her in the future, it would only occur if you accepted such an outcome."

Adela tapped her armrest nervously for several minutes. The truth of the matter was she did not want Berengar and Ava to be together, but she feared if she said that, then Berengar would assume she had not gotten over her previous jealousy.

Luckily, Ava held little meaning to Berengar, and he did not care if he continued an affair with her either way. Upon seeing the anxiety in Adela's eyes, Berengar grabbed hold of her dainty hand and smiled warmly as he informed her how he felt about the issue.

"You can be honest with me. The truth of the matter is, I do not care for your sister like I do you, or the others. If a relationship were to form between us, it would be purely sexual. If you do not desire such a thing, simply say it, and I will inform the woman."

Adela thought about the issue for several moments. It was one thing to selfishly keep Berengar and Ava apart, but the problem was her sister was a complete mess without the support of someone else to rely on. Thinking about this further, Ava was unlikely to remarry.

With all the young marriageable women flooding into the Empire from other countries, it would be rare for a man to marry a mother of four as one of his five wives, and look after her children as his own. Even Berengar did not desire to do such a thing. When Adela thought about such a horrible fate, she knew what the answer was in her heart. With a heavy sigh, she gave Berengar her honest opinion on the matter.

"This might be selfish of me to say, but I want you to continue your relationship with Ava..."

Berengar nearly choked on his wine when he heard this response. He had done the math in his head, and the probability of Adela accepting an affair with Ava was virtually nonexistent. Or so he thought. Before he could speak up, Adela wore a very serious expression as she continued on her previous statement.

"You're the uncle to her children, and they need a paternal figure in their life. At this point, my sister is unlikely to remarry, and even if she were to do such a thing, the man most likely won't be of high quality. For the sake of Ava's kids, I want you to be in her life, and a part of her kid's life as their uncle. You don't have to be their father, but you can be their father figure."

Berengar was truly shocked when he heard these words escape from Adela's mouth. She had always been the jealous type and had fought his harem every step of the way. Now she was saying that she not only wanted him to continue sleeping with her sister, but to be an active part of her life? It was too much for him to comprehend. He had to make sure the woman was not trolling him.

"Are you sure that this is what you want?"

Adela smiled as she nodded her head. She would be lying if she said the idea of Berengar and Ava being together did not cause her any pain. However, she was kindhearted enough to know that with Wolfgang's death, Ava would need a proper man in her life, and she would not find anyone better than Berengar.

When Berengar saw the serious expression on his wife's pretty face, he could only scoff in disbelief. Since she had said a relationship with her sister was acceptable, he would not back down. He leaned over his desk and kissed the woman on the cheek before teasing her.

"Since you have accepted, there is no turning back. I'm going to have a lot of fun with Ava. Perhaps you could join us?"

Rather than flush in embarrassment, Adela nibbled on her husband's ear before taunting him herself.

"Be careful what you wish for. You just might get it!"

Berengar could not help but chuckle when he heard this. He immediately voiced his disbelief as he gazed upon Adela's coquettish expression.

"Who are you, and what have you done with my wife?"

It was at this moment that Berengar no longer regretted putting Adela through Linde's training. It would appear some of that vixen's mannerisms had rubbed off on the girl.

#### Chapter 712 Making Up

The thought of sleeping with both Adela and her older sister at the same time turned Berengar on more than it should have. Adela gazed that the tent he was pitching and wore a sultry smile. The door was locked behind them, and nobody would be intruding on their fun at this hour. Thus, she took it upon herself to unzip her husband's trousers and gaze upon his mighty serpent with lust in her sapphire eyes.

By now Adela had lost her signature twintails and gone with a slightly wavy hairstyle that cascaded over the right side of her face like a river of flowing gold. She was not the little girl Berengar once knew in the days following his reincarnation. Though she was more petite and thin than his other wives, her body was by no means childish. Berengar was quick to unzip her baby blue dress, revealing nothing but her sheer black undergarments.

Adela had even dressed herself in some very adult attire, as she wore a lacey and transparent thong, with a matching bra. Surprisingly, instead of a strap, her panties used a string of black pearls, which clung to her puffy lips tightly. Upon seeing her beautiful pussy, the man only got more erect, which caused the woman to react with shock. It had been too long since she and her husband had been intimate.

"My God, all these years, and I still can't believe how big this thing is!"

She did not hesitate after speaking those words, and quickly lowered her pretty pink lips onto the glans, sucking earnestly, as if there was a tasty treat lying deep within its shaft. Berengar gazed upon the beautiful young woman who had just recently turned twenty, and could hardly believe his own eyes. He was feeling more attraction to the girl now than he had ever felt for her before in his life.

Adela skillfully moved her tongue down the sides of the shaft before inserting it deep into her mouth. Unlike Linde, she was not a blowjob queen, and had always suffered to take its entire length down her throat, but today she planned to do just that. If Berengar was going to sleep with her sister, then she wanted to remind him why she herself was his wife, and Ava was only a mistress.

As the woman choked down her husband's length as deep as she could, she played with her moist twat, inserting one finger deep into her depths, before another, and another. She wanted her man to cum as quickly as possible, so she could taste his overwhelming seed.

Berengar grunted in pleasure as he grabbed hold of the back of his wife's head and forced it down onto his shaft, deeper than it had ever gone. Adela's eyes widened in shock as she realized she had accomplished her goal. The entire length of her husband's shaft was shoved down her throat, and she was struggling not to vomit. Berengar let go of the woman's head as he realized she was about to throw up, and released his sword from its sheath.

Adela panted heavily as she recovered from the intense throat fucking she had just received while using one hand to stroke her husband's cock. The delicate feeling of the woman's milky hands pushed Berengar over the edge as he grabbed hold of her pretty face and released his seed all over it.

Luckily for Adela, her mouth was already open and captured much of the shot, where she drank its contents with a seductive smile on her pretty face. She did not hesitate to wrap her lips around the glans and suck down the rest of her husband's seed. When all was said and done, he was still hard, and she was wetter than ever.

Adela parted her beaded panties to the side, and held onto the rear of the desk while waving her ass in the air, enticing Berengar to claim his prize. She wore a lust filled expression as she stretched her asshole, signalling for the man to attack.

"Take whichever hole you desire!"

Though she said this, her actions clearly showed she was favoring the idea of anal, and Berengar did not hesitate. He fiercely gripped the woman's golden hair, and shoved his cock deep within her twitching asshole, causing her to moan out in pleasure the moment it was inserted.

Berengar rammed his hips forward and pressed his shaft as deep as it could go into the woman's ass. He raised his free hand into the air and slapped her small but toned cheeks, leaving behind a visible red handprint. Adela moaned like a bitch in heat as her husband continued to thrust in and out of her tight hole with the frenzy that belonged to a wild beast.

After a few moments of intense sex, Adela squirted all over the kaiser's chair, losing control of her legs in the process. This did not deter Berengar from halting his actions as he raised the girl into the air, and held her in his arms, while continuing to slam his cock into the furthest reaches of the woman's asshole. Adela could hardly form words as her mind had been filled with lust, and merely uttered the phrase.

"no, stop!"

Despite this plea for leniency, Berengar did not relent and continued to thrust his hips into the young woman's rear as if he were a piston, until finally he could hold back no longer, and released his seed deep inside the woman's innards.

When he released his shaft from his wife's asshole, a stream of cum flowed out and onto the floor as she knelt on the ground face first, recovering mentally from the fierce anal fucking she had just received.

Seeing that there was still one hole presenting itself that had still not received his seed, Berengar quickly aligned himself with the woman's moist cave and plunged his large shaft to the depths of her woman with his initial thrust. Her puffy lips parted way for the thick shaft, as her tight hole squeezed down on the intruder like a vice grip.

Adela did not resist, and merely acted lifelessly with her tongue hanging out of her mouth while she received her husband's cock with a smile on her face. Her mind was blank, and her face was overwhelmed with lust.

Berengar would cum into Adela's pussy a total of two times before finally being satisfied. As for the woman in question, she had practically passed out from the pleasure she had received. It was only now that Adela began to understand why it was a good idea to tackle her husband's lust with a partner by her side. Her stomach and womb were both filled with the man's seed, and she did not know if she could accept another offering.

Luckily for her, Berengar had his fill and quickly got dressed, leaving Adela in a befuddled state on the floor in a pool of her own bodily fluids. He smiled as he gazed upon the sight before departing from the room with some words of encouragement.

"I love you, sweetheart, but next time you should bring your sister along, it's clear you can't handle me on your own..."

With that said, he left his wife in a puddle of her own squirt, and continued on with his daily tasks. Adela would recover not long after and dress herself, before calling the maids in to clean up the mess that she and her husband had made.

It had been too long since she had been alone with her husband, and though she couldn't keep up with his pressure, she was glad to have finally gotten some alone time with the man she loved. Though Berengar was right, the next time she approached the man with sex in mind, she should probably have someone else accompany her.

Chapter 713 Vengeance is a Dish Best Served Chilly

It had been some time since Wolfgang was first taken into custody after he had assaulted an Imperial Prince, though he had been granted a stay of execution until his brother, who was an important General, and a Duke of the Empire could be consulted.

During this time, Wolfgang was sentenced by Berengar to serve in a labor camp until a time where his fate could be properly decided. While he endured his tenure in the labor camp, he had witnessed the justice of Germany first hand.

No prisoner was exempt from the backbreaking labor they would be forced to endure day in and day out, and it was because of this that especially pampered noblemen like Wolfgang typically died from attrition long before their sentence was complete. Luckily Wolfgang had survived his treatment, though he had lost much of his youthful vigor.

Though he was fed three meals a day, in sufficient quantity to keep him in proper physical shape for the labor he must perform. He struggled to meet the demands that were given to him by the guards of the Labor Camp. Because of this, he was punished further. If he had to explain his life at this very moment, it was a single word. Hell...

Thus, it was a surprise when he was called off from his normal routine and brought in chains to a secure location. He honestly believed he was about to be executed. However, when he saw the stoic face of the

Kaiser standing before him, he could not help but fall to his knees and beg for forgiveness. He was willing to do anything to get himself out of his current predicament.

"My Kaiser, please forgive my transgressions. I was blind, but now I can see. My sins are grave, but I beg of you, as a fellow father and husband, to release me and I will give to you whatever you desire..."

Berengar did not have the slightest emotion on his handsome face. Instead, he calmly reached into his jacket and pulled out a packet of hemp cigarettes. He placed one of such devices in his mouth before lighting it aflame with his pocket lighter.

After doing so, he inhaled the smoke heavily before exhaling it into the surrounding air. It was only after he had done this gesture that he flick the lit cigarette onto the face of the bounded prisoner and chuckled at his comments.

"You strike my son, and now you wish to bargain with me? What kind of moron are you? Did you honestly expect that I would be lenient with you after abusing my child? Tsk tsk tsk... I regret to inform you, Wolfgang, but I have already taken possession of the sole thing you possess which I desire. Your wife has been excellent company these past few weeks, and perhaps she will soon be with child."

It took a few moments for Berengar's comments to register in the dullard's brain, but when he did, he immediately rose to his feet, infuriated by both the Emperor and his wife's scandalous actions. Since his wife was not here to admit to her infidelity in person, he could only take out his wrath on her partner.

"The fucking slut! I can't fuck believe she would betray me like this! First, she summons the guards after I taught your little brat a lesson in humility, and then she cheats on me at the first opportunity she is given. If I ever get out of here, that bitch is a dead woman!"

Berengar scowled when he heard this statement. The man was utterly unrepentant for his sins. All of that pleading for forgiveness a few moments prior was clearly nothing but an act. Naturally, the Kaiser would not tolerate this insult and responded to Wolfgang's aggression by grabbing hold of his head and head butting him in the soft points of his face three times before repeatedly kneeing him in the groin.

Wolfgang instantly dropped to his knees in agony as vomited his breakfast all over the floor. His nose was broken from the impact of the Kaiser's forehead, and he had spat out several teeth into a mixture of vomit and blood. Despite the prisoner's condition, Berengar did not end his cruelty. He quickly stepped on the man's head and forced it into the vomit in an act of total humiliation.

"You dare speak to me, your Kaiser, with such hatred? Who gave you permission to rise? You fucking imbecile, you still don't get it. How stupid can you be? I always promised you I would get my vengeance for the shit you pulled back in Graz so many years ago. You think I had forgiven you? In truth, I just forgotten about the incident considering what a pathetic waste you are. That is until you had the nerve to strike my son.

Whether you live or die is up to your brother. I have too much respect for the man to execute his eldest brother without consulting him. However, you may want to know what your brother told me when I informed him about your crimes. He said and I quote:

Let the man rot. I have more important matters to attend to. When I have concluded my business in Iberia, I will consult with you on the punishment for his crimes.panda-novel,c,om

Your own brother sees you as a fucking disgrace, unworthy of his immediate attention. It's a shame a woman as fine as Ava was married to your incompetent ass. Hopefully, her children aren't infected with the stupidity of their father. However, if they are, then I will simply grace her with new children, born from my superior seed.

So sit back and enjoy your time in this labor camp. The only thing you have to look forward to is death, or exile. There is no other alternative. You are an utter disgrace to your family, your race, and your nation."

After saying this, Berengar spat on the man who lie underneath his boot, where he removed his foot and give an order to the guards.

"Make sure this idiot eats that mess there! Because he's not getting another portion to replace it!"

The labor camp guards forced Wolfgang's face further into the pile of vomit and issued their demands while raising their clubs to prepare for his refusal.

"You heard the kaiser, clean up your mess!"

Wolfgang glared in hatred towards the sinister grin on Berengar's face. In the next second, he felt his back struck by a club, and the vomit shoveled into his mouth by the other guards. They continued this process until Wolfgang had devoured all the vomit and his dislodged teeth from the snow on the ground.

He wanted to throw up once more, but choked in down in fear that he would be forced to endure the same treatment. After Wolfgang had done as he was ordered, Berengar gave one more order to the guards before departing.

"Alright, I've seen enough. Get this fool back to work!"

After saying that, Berengar departed from the labor camp with his Imperial Guard in tow. He did not look back on the fate of Wolfgang, because, in all honesty, he did not care. His brother would decide his fate. Either way, Wolfgang would either be dead, or wish that he was.

Interestingly enough, the moment Berengar entered the carriage that he had taken to the Labor Camp, a busty blonde woman latched to his side and kissed his cheek. This woman was none other than Ava. She could not help but question what had become of her husband.

"How did he take it?"

In response to this, Berengar scoffed before petting the woman's golden hair while answering her question.

"As about as well as you would expect. The man has learned his fate, and knows that he is being cucked constantly with nothing he can do about it. I wouldn't be surprised if he took his own life..."

It was not Ava's turn to scoff as she shook her head with a determined look on her face.

"Wolfgang isn't brave enough to end his own life. He would rather live in misery than face the uncertainty of death. He's a coward through and through, and is willing to do anything to keep on living a little longer. I'm glad to be rid of him!"



Berengar chuckled when he heard the woman's vile statement about her own husband and kissed her passionately in the back seat of the carriage. He had plenty of time to kill on his journey back to Kufstein and would make use of it by using Ava's body to pleasure himself.

Obviously, now that Adela had approved of her relationship with Berengar, Ava did not resist in the slightest. She knew she was only a mistress, and because of this she let Berengar let out his pent up energy with her body in any way he pleased.

The idea of making love with the Emperor while her husband rotted away in a prison camp turned the sultry minx on, which only caused her to be more enthusiastic about her actions. Thus, the rest of the duo's journey back to Capital was spent in pleasure.

#### Chapter 714 Naval Ambitions in the Pacific

Itami sighed heavily as she gazed upon the list of natural resources she had at her disposal. While she did not want for many things. There was a certain material she desperately needed, which she severely lacked. Iron was a relatively rare commodity on the Island Nation of Japan, and she needed vast quantities of it to fully industrialize and modernize her new empire.

Without a large stockpile of iron, Itami could only produce limited quantities of her new Itami Rifles, and artillery pieces. If she wanted to take full advantage of industrialization, she would need a large supply. Unfortunately, she could not find it in her homeland, and lacked the means to sail to other, less developed regions of the world, such as the Americas or Africa, which were rich in such resources. No, if she wanted iron, she would need to search for regions in North-East Asia where she could gain access to it.

Attacking China was out of the question. Even with her superior armies, and technology, it would be impossible for her to claim the Chinese mainland in any significant capacity. Let alone hold on to it. If there was one thing she found foolish about the Japanese Empire in her past life, it was the idea that they actually believed they could conquer China and subjugate its people. It was simply unfeasible no matter how she saw it. She would laugh about the whole idea if it hadn't ended so tragically.

Since she would not invade China, that left one particular region rich in iron that she could exploit as part of her Empire. That would be the Korean peninsula. The problem with this was that the Joseon were a tributary state of the Ming, and invading the Korean Peninsula to seize the iron rich regions in the north was likely to result in hostilities with the Ming.

Unless she could convince the Ming Emperor that Japan was a better ally than the Joseon, she would likely fight the Ming in a conflict that would prove bloody for both sides. Itami could only sigh as she gazed at her map. The annexation of Korea was inevitable, but how she would go about it while avoiding the most bloodshed was her greatest concern.

For now, she would send emissaries to both the Ming and Joseon. Until she could build a powerful enough navy to defeat the Joseon, it would force her to trade for the iron ore she so desperately needed. She wrote a series of letters addressing her Korean and Chinese counterparts. For the Ming, she planned to pay tribute to them with gifts of cosmetics, perfume, and other products that could only be found in her Japanese Empire.

Itami was not Berengar. Though she favored war as a means to achieve her ambitions, she was not above bowing her head to another Empire in return for the benefits she would receive. Ultimately, she did not have the pride of a man in her heart, and would thus resort to acts that Berengar would consider humiliating if it meant completing her objectives.

As for the Joseon, she would use a more heavy-handed approach in negotiations. Her military might was vastly superior to the Korean's, and she needed only a year or two to build up a navy capable of destroying their fleet. Naturally, since she could not produce ironclads for some time, due to a substantial lack of the resources required, she would devise vessels based upon a Korean design.

The legendary Korean Turtle Ship had yet to be produced in this timeline. After all, they would not come into existence for another hundred years. However, she could build them, and ensure naval dominance in the Pacific for years to come. As part of her attempts to one up Julian in her past life, she had studied naval history extensively, as it was a more important part of Japan's history than it was Germany's.

Though it would take some effort, she could effectively design a turtle ship from scratch. Which she immediately did. After spending hours at her desk with a pen and some paper, Itami designed the ship of her desires. It was essentially a steam powered turtle ship that utilized a triple expansion steam engine, a propulsion screw, and a set of boilers. She had a wicked grin on her face as she declared victory at that moment.

"With these, my fleets will be unmatched in the entire world. After all, it will be some time before the Europeans invent their Ships of the Line... Though it is not a true ironclad, the turtle ship will be superior to anything else I can create until I get the necessary resources to create a fleet of them!"

Itami slunk back into her chair and rested for god knows how long until her door opened to reveal one of her ministers. Though she was surprised to see him, she was happy, as he was just the man she wanted to talk to about Naval Innovations.

"Maeda-san, I was just about to go looking for you. Here, take these and look them over. You are the naval expert. I want to see your opinion on the new naval vessel I designed!" panda-novel,c,om

The man named Maeda Akitoshi sneered when he heard the little girl had created a new ship design. Was it so easy to do such a thing? However, when he gazed upon the design in question, his jaw practically dropped.

The overall design was unique. The ship had a wooden shell which covered the deck and was plated with iron spikes. This covering made it difficult to harm the crew, while deterring any form of grappling. When armed with multiple cannons, it would certainly become an effect tool of war.

While the original ship design from her past life boasted defensive and offensive capabilities alike, it was less capable than a European frigate, if not for the sole fact that it was severely lacking in both speed and maneuverable. The entire ship was practically a floating rectangle, and was powered by a combination of junk style sails and wooden rows.

Itami solved some of these issues by replacing its primitive means of propulsion with a vertical triple expansion engine. Naturally, many things had to be redesigned to accommodate this, but the end result was feasible, at least in theory. It would probably take numerous modifications to actually make a

practical naval vessel out of the blueprints she had designed. Still, the man named Maeda Akitoshi could see the practical advantages of such a vessel.

He was beginning to think this bloodthirsty cunt wasn't so useless after all. Like many of the people who supported Itami, Maeda Akitoshi was not an avid follower, but someone who was swept up in her reign of terror. Itami only wanted the most capable people working beneath her, and unlike Berengar, because she was a woman, many of them thought poorly of her behind close doors.

Still, Itami continued to amaze these people with her intelligence, and because of that, men like Maeda Akitoshi would either slowly change their preconceived notions of her, or do something foolish that would get them marked for death. After looking over the designs for a while, Maeda Akitoshi sighed heavily before nodding his head in agreement with Itami's wishes.

"I will need some more time to study these devices, but it should be doable. I will let you know when I have constructed the first prototype. Tell me, Itami-sama, are we preparing for a war with a foreign power?"

When Itami heard this, she merely broke out into a fit of giggles, before nodding her head and answering the old man's question.

"Of course. We will build a grand navy and conquer much of Asia beneath our banner. It is our destiny! But to do this, we will need a powerful navy, and this ship is the first step."

The veteran sailor, who now acted as Itami's Minister of Naval Warfare, nodded his head in silence. The Empress truly had grand ambitions. He was just about to leave when he thought of something important.

"What shall I name the vessel?"

Itami did not even think about the question posed to her. Instead, she responded with a single word before dismissing the man.

"Kame"

After saying this, the Minister of Naval Warfare left the Empress's office, where the young woman pulled out a bottle of sake and drank to her heart's content. With these vessels, she could successfully invade Korea. However, when and how she achieved this would be up to diplomacy with the Ming. For now, she could only sit back and relax. Now that her da

#### Chapter 715 The Prince's Tea Party

Hans sat in a room while sipping from a teacup that contained whole milk. On a plate in front of him were some treats, such as cookies and cupcakes. By his side were the princesses of Poland and Bohemia, as well as the most recent addition to the Royal Palace. Princess Priya Tomara of the Anangpur Empire.

Since Hans had saved Veronika from the Grand Duke of Moscow, the Bohemian princess had looked at Hans in a new light. Though there were several years apart between them, with Veronika being in her early teenage years, and Hans being a pre-pubescent child. She accepted her engagement to the boy and treated him with respect.

Natalia was practically the same age as Hans, and did not understand why the girl who she thought of as an older sister was behaving so courteously to Hans when she used to be rather standoffish. This sudden change in behavior caused the young girl to become competitive, where she began to follow Hans around like a pet. Truthfully, the young prince found the Polish princess to be a bit of a nuisance, but she was cute enough in his eyes to keep her around.

At the moment, Priya was observing the reactions between Hans and the two other princesses with an awkward smile on her face. Veronika was discussing matters of importance with her fiance, and Natalia was begging for attention.

"Hans, are you listening? Pay attention to me!"

Hans merely lifted his hand into the air, signalling the young girl to be silent as he continued a conversation with Veronika about the concerns she had about the upcoming crusade. Natalia pouted when she saw she was being ignored, but listened to Veronika's words nonetheless.

"I fear Natalia's father might do something foolish. He had already sent his eldest son to his death against the German Armies. Who is to say he does not conscript all of Poland's young men to invade us from the East? If that happens, Bohemia will become a battleground. Does the Reich have enough troops to defend all its borders?"

When Natalia heard the mention of her father and dead brother, she grimaced. She did not want to be reminded of her life before becoming a ward. She was still very young when she first entered the Reich, but she could remember the relative poverty the Polish Monarchy had when compared to the Kaiser's household.

She could never enjoy herself as much as she did now, if she were still in Poland. Thus, she was rather grateful to the von Kufstein family for all they had done for her. Despite being a ward, she felt as if she was a genuine member of the family. Thus, she had a hard time understanding what Veronika meant when she said that her father was willing to send so many young men to their deaths.

Hans immediately answered Veronika's questions with a confident smile on his face.

"Of course, we have the means to defend our borders. I have looked upon my father's designs. They are quite brilliant. A few thousand men on one section of the border can defend it from tens if not hundreds of thousands. Not to mention the national railway is nearing completion. We can easily dispatch our reserves to compromised sections of the border if such a scenario occurs. Truth be told, it would be an absolute slaughter if the Polish were to invade through Prussia or Bohemia."

Priya gazed upon the Prince and Princess who were discussing matters of war with confusion in her eyes. They were awfully young to be having such a conversation. Was the potential for war really that much of a concern that even children would talk about it? She did not understand that Hans was a genius, who was being groomed to succeed his father, nor was she aware of the whole situation that Germany was facing and was quick to voice her concerns.

"Are you guys expecting an invasion soon?"

Hans and Veronika gazed over towards Priya with sympathy. She had only arrived in Kufstein recently, and was illiterate when it came to the politics of Europe. Hans could not help but sigh heavily before

giving a brief overview of the German Empire's current foreign relations. He did not speak of propaganda like Henrietta had, but the truth as he understood it.

"My father has made a lot of enemies in his rise to power. Practically all of our neighbors despise us. Not only has he used force at every given opportunity to achieve his goals, but he has also pissed on the primary religion of the European continent. To put this in perspective, the Catholic Church holds immense influence over the European Kingdoms, or had I should say.

When my father was just a lowly baron's son, the church conspired with my uncle to eliminate him. My father outsmarted them, and as a response to their sinister actions, he thoroughly angered the papacy by executing a few of their representatives and starting a reformation in the Church that split power away from the Papacy.

Over the years, the Papacy has fought my father via a series of proxy wars, trying to halt his expansion and prevent his influence from spreading. For the record, my father prevailed in each conflict, thoroughly angering the Papacy who now intend to unite the Catholic world against the Reich and march on us from all corners of our Empire.

Fortunately, my father has built robust border defenses and secured powerful allies. Otherwise, such a situation could prove dire, even with our superior military might. It is not easy to defend your lands from millions of screaming crusaders.

Natalia's father is one of the Catholic Kings who holds a grudge against my father and his Empire for more than one reason. It is our fear he might do something foolish, like conscript every young man in his Kingdom and send them off to war on our Eastern borders. Such a thing would prove disastrous.... for Poland."panda-novel,c,om

It astounded Priya to hear that the German Empire was surrounded on all sides by potentially hostile states. Only the North had an ally on its borders, and even then Berengar had prepared ample border defenses against the Kalmar Union in case they switched sides. Priya thought about it for a second before asking the most serious question on her mind.

"Are these other kingdoms a threat? Should I be worried about this upcoming war?"

In response to this, both Veronika and Hans scoffed at the same time before the Prince voiced his opinions on the matter.

"If you knew the weapons that the Reich has available, you would understand how foolish of a question that is. Any attempt to invade our lands would be an absolute slaughter of the enemy. The problem that I see with this eventual war is the desperation it will cause to our neighbors. If we wipe out millions of young men from across Europe, it will cause famine and poverty on a massive scale.

Our neighbors are still feudal states. They would have to send every peasant farm boy to war to have a chance of breaking through our borders, and they would not get far even if they did. It would be a monumental loss of life, which would only cause further despair in our neighboring realms."

Veronika nodded her head when she heard Hans' statement before adding her own thoughts on the issue.

"The reich currently has a very strict immigration and refugee policy. A small number of women from kingdoms that are either Germanic or have a Germanic history, such as the Kalmar Union, England, Burgundy, and France, are allowed into the country so long as they marry German men. There are a few exceptions granted to women from neighboring kingdoms like Hungary and Poland, but the majority of these women come from the aforementioned countries.

This immigration policy has led to the most beautiful and fertile women from those countries seeking a better life in the reich, and competing for German males. This has proven helpful in increasing the population of the Reich and is well regulated by the Department of Immigration to ensure that there is no major demographic shift in the country.

While this is good for the Reich, it is bad for the other kingdoms. It will be even worse if we eliminate millions of young men from these foreign kingdoms in a defensive war. In the neighboring realms, there will be few men left who can plow the fields, let alone marry and reproduce. Our neighbors would become desperate for survival, and the number of refugees trying to flood into our country could become disastrous. We would need to expand the border guard substantially and use lethal force to deter these refugees.

There could be a diplomatic solution to this crisis if the Kaiser actually cared about the lives of foreigners, and if the Pope wasn't so desperate to cling onto the past glories of the Church. Unfortunately, these two men are willing to fight a disastrous war for European Hegemony that will undoubtedly result in the deaths of millions. However, in the end, all we can do is lament the loss of life. Truly, it is none of our concern, as we are the younger generation in the Reich who will not suffer in the slightest."

Hans nodded his head in agreement with Veronika's summary of the future crusade. Though if he were to be honest with himself, if he was in his father's position, he would be just as stubborn in dealing with the Church. Priya, on the other hand, felt as if she had been through a university lecture on geo-politics, and felt as if her head was spinning. She calmed this sensation by drinking the milk in her cup. After doing so, she shifted the subject to something irrelevant.

"Still, he is amazing, isn't he?"

Hans raised his brow when he heard this before asking for clarification from the young girl on who she was referring to.

"Who?"

Priya flushed with embarrassment as she noticed all eyes were on her. She averted her gaze before voicing her thoughts aloud.

"The Kaiser! He is so powerful that even the entire continent combined can't bring him down!"

Hans and Veronika merely sighed as they heard the girl's opinion on Berengar. They rolled their eyes before expressing the same sentiment.

"Oh great, another one..."

Priya and Natalia did not understand what they meant by that, and the duo did not elaborate. Instead, they continued to educate Priya about the current affairs of the Reich and its neighbors while enjoying sweets and milk.

#### Chapter 716 Departing for the Kalmar Union

It had been days since Berengar visited Wolfgang, and Berengar finally received word from the King of the Kalmar Union that he would be happy to accept the Kaiser's request for a visit. Not only that, but the man gave permission to Berengar, allowing him to ride through Jutland with a small host of armed bodyguards in order to explore the landscape of the region.

Winter had arrived, and Berengar had made many preparations for his journey north. Food, clothing, transportation, weapons, and munitions. These were all things that needed to be carefully planned, as he was unlikely to hunt anything in such dreadful weather. Thus, he spared no expense to ensure that he and his soldiers had the supplies needed to survive the harsh winters of Scandinavia.

Naturally, his army had winter uniforms designed for them in order to stave off the cold. He himself had one that was loosely based upon those used by German Field Marshalls in the Second World War of his past life.

Aside from gathering these things together, Berengar needed to coordinate with Honoria about her own provisions. Thus, he had approached his wife in her room while she was in the middle of packing. Berengar gazed upon the thick fur coat and woolen clothes that the woman was wearing and teased her.

"Any more clothing and you are going to make it extremely difficult for me to undress you..."

Honoria turned around and gazed upon her husband with a seductive smirk on her face as she responded to his advances positively.

"Oh, I am sure you will have all the time you need to undress me while the two of us are alone together in a tent."

Berengar chuckled when he heard this. He had to agree with the woman. After all, he and his Imperial Guard would travel across the winter wonderland of Jutland in military issued wagons which were similar in size and shape to those used by the American Army in the 19th century. Until he could develop combustion engines, transportation outside of the reich was still entirely operated by animal power.

It was because of these wagons that the party could transport a variety of supplies, such as tents and wooden stoves, to keep them warm and out of the snow. Due to the recent advancements in the field of synthetic materials, Germany's industry could now make waterproof tents that were capable of enduring the cold winters of Scandinavia.

Berengar actually looked forward to spending a camping trip with Honoria by his side. She was the only one of his wives who would not bitch about being in the wilds, and would actually enjoy it. He figured the two of them could enjoy the beautiful winter landscape of Jutland while making their way to the sacred grove where their true target lie in wait. Berengar quickly noticed the woman had everything she needed packed and helped lift some of her bags.

"Well then, shall we depart?"

Honorina lifted a few bags as well before nodding with a pretty smile on her face.

"I've got everything that I need. So let's go!"

After saying this, Berengar descended the staircase along with his wife. The two of them had already said their proper goodbyes to the family and were quick to enter the courtyard, where they piled their belongings into the wagon.

The wagon took the couple to the nearest train station, where they boarded the Royal Train and departed towards the border province of Schleswig-Holstein, where a company of elite imperial guardsmen lie in wait for them.

Berengar could not help but chuckle as he gazed upon the outfit Honorina was wearing. As a privateer, she had a penchant for military fashion, and one of her girls designed the uniforms that her crew wore. For whatever reason, the winter outfit that Honorina was wearing closely resembled that of Soviet officers from the second world war of Berengar's past life.

Or at the very least, the outerwear did. Beneath it she had far more fashionable clothing, for example over her merino wool long underwear she wore a beige turtleneck commando style sweater which clung to her natural curves nicely. Atop her head was both a knitted skullcap and a brown fur ushanka.

Honorina had washed out the dye in her hair and gone back to a natural color. Berengar noticed this and smiled. He nodded his head in approval before complimenting the woman's beauty.

"I must say Honorina, you look very pretty in your winter attire..."panda-novel,c,om

Honorina smiled when she heard this. It was not every day that Berengar complimented her appearance. Lately, he had been busy with his other wives and had not shown her the attention she needed. She was just happy that the two of them could finally spend some time together. Thus, she voiced her enthusiasm for the trip.

"I'm looking forward to this trip. It will be good to finally be alone together without interference from the others."

In response to this, Berengar merely chuckled before nodding his head. The journey via train continued to the border for several hours before the duo arrived at their destination. Afterward, Berengar climbed out of the train and led Honorina into the area where they rendezvoused with the soldiers who would be their escort.

Unlike Berengar, who was in a WWII style winter uniform, his soldiers were in late WWI style uniforms. The Captain in charge of the unit immediately saluted the Kaiser and responded with the information that Berengar wanted to hear.

"Sir, we are prepared for the journey. We can depart whenever you are ready!"

Berengar smiled when he heard this and returned the man's salute.

"Very well, then. We shall depart at once. I have no time to waste here at the border."



With this said, Berengar and Honoria climbed into one of the wagons, and rode off past the Northern border and into Denmark. The couple watched from the interior of the wagon as they gazed upon the German border they had left behind.

Unlike most of the borders of the German Empire. Berengar had prepared little in terms of defences with the neighboring Kalmar union. Rather than a robust trench system that was protected by barbed wire, reinforced concrete bunkers, machine guns, and landmines. The border with the Kalmar union was a simple chain-link fence that was topped with razor wire.

There were a series of small immigration checkpoints, which allowed more people to pass through into the reich than anywhere else in the world. The reasoning for this was simple. Not only was there a military alliance with the Kalmar Union, but its people were considered cousins to the Germans. Because of these two factors, the Kalmar Union had special immigration laws compared to the rest of the world.

Not only could entire families cross into the Reich with little difficulty, but they could earn German citizenship through service to the state. Naturally, these immigrants had to learn the German language, assimilate to its culture, and pass a written exam about the nation's history. However, that was the extent that the Nordic people had to go through to immigrate to the Reich.

Unlike the rest of the world, that could only gain citizenship through multiple generations of interbreeding. The Nordic countries had a much easier time gaining citizenship, which had many benefits. Honoria gazed upon the hundreds of Nordic immigrants who were lined up at the border outpost as their wagon drifted further into the distance. She noticed the difference in treatment that these people received compared to the rest of the world and quickly voiced her curiosity.

"Say, Berengar, why do the immigrants from the Kalmar Union get treated so much better than the people from everywhere else?"

It surprised Berengar to see that Honoria was not aware of why this was the case. He thought it was obvious. However, since she had asked, he would not hide his reasoning.

"That's simple. Unlike the rest of the world, the Nordic and German peoples share a common ancestry. Though there are some differences in language and culture, I consider them cousins to the German people, and because of that, I gave them an easier path to citizenship. The same can't be said for the rest of the world. Though at one point the Germans spread throughout Europe, those regions have long since been influenced by other parts of the world, and are no longer Germanic in nature."

Honoria nodded her head in silence as she reflected on this reasoning. From her understanding of the Reich's immigration policies, and citizenship requirements, it seemed to be based upon heritage more so than qualification. She did not understand why this was the case, but for the time being, she did not question it. Perhaps at a later date she would ask her husband why he felt this was necessary.

For now, she was more concerned with the journey ahead, and thus she rested her head on Berengar's shoulder as the two of them sat within the canvas-covered wagon, unaffected by the snow that was falling from the sky above. The journey to the Sacred Grove would be a long one, and she was prepared to endure whatever the gods could throw at them.

Chapter 717 winter Wonderland

It had been several hours since the journey beyond the German border had begun. Since then, Berengar and Honoria had stayed within their wagon. However, eventually, the caravan stopped in the middle of nowhere. Though they were on the correct path towards the location that Linde had marked as a potential sacred grove, the sun had begun to set, and it would not be wise to continue their journey through the darkness. The cold winter nights of Denmark were not to be underestimated.

As a result, the Imperial Guard formed a barrier with their wagons, much like the Pioneers in American history would have. From there, they built a large central firepit and staked their tents into the ground. Setting up camp was a rather quick process, as these were trained professionals who were well experienced in the field.

Berengar and Honoria did not sit idly by and set up their own tent, where they placed a wood-burning stove inside of it, as well as a futon mattress with some thick wool sheets and a down comforter. The Kaiser cooked some of their rations that he had brought with them on the stove, with the pans they had prepared for the journey.

While Berengar worked on the meal, Honoria looked around at the encampment. The tents were spread out within the encirclement that was established with the wagons. There were even tents made for the horses so that they could be comfortable, even in the frozen weather.

Sentries drew straws to determine who would be on first watch while the rest of them slept in their tents. Honoria noticed these things as she witnessed the snow fall heavily from the clouded skies above. She never would have thought that an encampment established for a company of soldiers would be a beautiful sight. However, in her eyes, this was truly a winter wonderland.

Honoria smiled as she entered the tent and smelled the food Berengar had prepared for her. Unlike the rest of Berengar's women, she actually enjoyed the food eaten in the field by soldiers. Over the past few years, rations had advanced to the point where they were now enjoyable to eat.

With advancements in food preservation technology and material sciences, Berengar had introduced dedicated rations to the military that were more than just canned food. Freeze-dried emergency food from Berengar's past life inspired the soldier's current issue rations.

The reasoning for making these rations was a simple matter of efficiency. Not only could they last for up to 25 years if left alone, but they were easy to prepare and tasted much better than what had been previously issued to the soldiers.

After preparing the food, Berengar and Honoria ate a rather simple but hearty meal. For whatever reason, the woman was in a good mood, and her husband took notice of this. He could not help but inquire what made her so happy.

"You seem awfully happy? Is there any reason in particular?"

Honoria giggled when she heard this. She continued to dine on her meal while speaking intermittently.

"Of course! I finally get some alone time with you! The last time we went on a journey together, you got lost, and I was worried that you had died. You do not know how stressful that was for me. If you died on my watch, I know that Linde would have most likely murdered me. However, this time, it isn't a

treacherous journey. Instead, we are alone in this winter wonderland, with no nearby threats to worry about. Why wouldn't I be happy?"

Berengar reflected on Honoria's words for some time. It was true that he had not spent as much alone time with her as he should have. The truth of the matter was their schedules often conflicted, and she was probably the wife he spent the least amount of time with. He scoffed when he remembered what the woman had said about Linde and instantly teased her about it.

"So you're worried Linde will hold you responsible if I end up dying on your watch?"

Honoria wore a bitter expression when she heard this. She remembered the tantrum Linde had thrown via telegraph when she found out Berengar was missing. She was thankful that she did not have to witness that rant in person, for if she did, she was fearful that Linde might have struck her. However, enough time had passed that Honoria found this entire debacle to be humorous and giggled as she joked with her husband.

"You do not know how frightening your wife can be, do you?"

Naturally upon hearing this, Berengar thought it was the perfect time to tease Honoria more by feigning ignorance.

"Which one?"

In response to Berengar's words, Honoria merely gave him a questioning look. Her gaze alone was asking if she really needed to answer his question. This caused Berengar to laugh as he pat the girl's head before pouring them two cups of wine. After handing one cup to Honoria, he took a sip from his own before commenting on the situation.

"A woman's fury is a terrifying thing, isn't it? Don't tell me she held you responsible for my disappearance in Berenstadt?"

Honoria curled up by Berengar's side and rested her head on his shoulder as she informed him of the details he was unaware of.

"Oh, she was furious, alright! Though I only spoke to her via telegraph, I could tell by the words she sent that she was not only outraged by your disappearance but also heartbroken. She wanted you found alive at all costs, even if it meant burning down the entire continent and killing everyone in it.

Did you know that she even threatened to kill herself if you died in the New World away from her arms? Her plan was to give birth to your child, and then join you in the afterlife, leaving your children to be raised by the others. I love that woman, but sometimes she can be a terrifying bitch... especially when it concerns your safety.

Anyway, enough about Linde and her unhealthy obsession with you. Tonight is the first night we have been alone together in a long time, and I plan to take advantage of that!"

Berengar chuckled when he heard this. He quickly drank down the contents of his wine before pouring another cup. Since he was alone with Honoria, he might as well shift the subject to something she was more interested in.

"So how goes the privateering and exploration?"

Honorina raised her cup, signalling Berengar for a refill, which he was happy to help with. While the man was filling her chalice, she rambled on about her previous discoveries.

"I wish I could tell you some exciting news, but there hasn't been a major naval conflict in some time, and thus my crew has been busy with exploration. They've charted a large coastline of the new world, as well as previously undiscovered regions of Africa. Speaking of which, weren't we supposed to go on an expedition to the southern tip of Africa? What happened to that?"

Berengar sighed when he heard this before revealing his plans for that expedition.

"Initially, I had planned to sail for Africa this year, but it appears we will have to wait until the spring. Though it could be later. If the papacy marches on our lands next year, we might have to delay the expedition to an even later date. With the war in the Holy Land entering its current stage, it will not be long before the Crusaders realize they are trapped in the Mediterranean and will try to force their way back to their homes.

The only way they can achieve this is by sailing to the balkans and marching on our eastern borders. By out maneuvering the Pope, I have all but guaranteed that the Crusader armies will have to strike from the east. Allowing for an easier defense of the fatherland.

Once we have crushed the Papacy and gained hegemony over the western world, I will be in a better place to send out expeditions to Africa and the New World. Until then, you will just have to be patient..."

Honorina sighed as she heard this and drank from her chalice. She knew the initial plan to set sail within a few months was too good to be true. As a result, she simply nodded her head in silence. It would probably be another year before she sailed to another undiscovered part of the world with her husband. Berengar noticed the longing expression on the woman's face and cheered her up by giving her some good news.

"Well, think of it this way: if the Crusaders try to set sail for the balkans to attack our eastern border, you and your girls will have ample opportunities for piracy."

When Honorina heard this, she regained her previous cheerful demeanor and nodded her head thrice.

"That's good. It's been a while since the girls and I have raided on the seas. I think people have already forgotten about our achievements in piracy!"

Berengar chuckled when he heard this and hugged Honorina tightly. After a few moments in silence, they kissed passionately, as they fell onto the futon mattress and stripped themselves of their clothes. Honorina was not lying when she said she would take advantage of this journey. She did not plan to allow Berengar to have any rest on this night.

## Chapter 718 The Little Stowaway

While Berengar was away on his journey to the Kalmar Union, Yasmin was busy instructing her young son, Ghazi, in proper manners about how to act as the Sultan of Al-Andalus. The boy was dressed in his own form of imperial regalia, while his mother was dressed in a heavily embellished Kaftan. She fixed the boy's posture as the two of them looked into the mirror. The mother had a beautiful smile on her face as she lectured her son.

"Now that you are the Sultan you must learn how to act appropriately. Stand firm, straighten your back, and keep your chin held high. You should always behave as if you are in command, with an air of authority around you. In Al-Andalus, you are the Sultan, and that means you must not tolerate disrespect from anyone, no matter their position."

Ghazi gazed up at his mother with his amber eyes and nodded his head before answering the woman with an adorable smile on his face.

"Yes, mommy..."

Seeing her boy dressed like a little emperor, and have such a warm expression on his face, filled Yasmin's heart with pride. She petted his golden hair and hugged him before complimenting the boy.

"Very good, Ghazi! You must always show respect to your elders, especially your parents!"

The boy enjoyed the warmth of his mother's embrace as he gazed into the mirror at his stellar appearance with a humble smile on his face. He was too young to really understand all the intrigue regarding his position.

All he needed was the approval of his mother and father. Both of which seemed to be pleased with his performance. Interestingly enough, his father was nowhere to be found, and thus the boy quickly asked about it.

"Where is father?"

A bittersweet smile formed on Yasmin's pretty lips as she stroked her boy's golden hair to the side.

"Your father is on an important diplomatic visit to the North. He should return in a few weeks. For now, I am afraid you're stuck with me..."

The young boy could only smile and nod his head in understanding. He knew little of his father's duties, or the true meaning behind his visit to the North. However, if his mother said it was important, then it must be. He only wished he could spend more time with the man.

While Yasmin was giving her son instructions on how to appear in a court, a knock resounded on the door to reveal Adela's figure. Yasmin's mood immediately soured as she saw the woman enter the mood. She and Adela were not on the best of terms. After all, the two of them came from opposing religions, and both of them were quite fierce in their faith.

However, Adela did not seem to be concerned about who was worshiping the right god at the moment, and instead appeared to be looking for something, or someone. She quickly voiced this concern as she gazed upon the Moorish woman and her young half-breed.

"Yasmin, have you seen Alexandros? It's time for his daily lessons, and I can't seem to find the boy."

Yasmin reflected on this question for some time. Now that she thought about it, she did not seem to remember encountering the boy during the past few days. This made her slightly concerned as she immediately questioned Adela on this matter.

"Adela? When was the last time you saw Alexandros?"

Adela immediately understood the intention behind this question, causing her jaw to drop in shock. She had not seen the boy since his parents had departed. While it was not uncommon for Alexandros to sneak off and mope after his mother and father went away, it was indeed rare for him to be missing for so long. She quickly rushed out the door and inquired with the other women who remained behind, just where the little boy had run off to.

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At the moment, Berengar and his soldiers were still camped in the winter wasteland of Jutland. Out of nowhere, a blizzard had occurred, and the soldiers were snowed into their position, unable to move forward without serious difficulty. Luckily, Berengar had brought ample supplies and was not the slightest bit concerned.

However, he had eaten through what remained of his first day's rations, and decided it was time to go out and fetch some more. Thus he quickly got dressed early in the morning, while Honoria was still asleep naked beneath the covers.

Berengar walked through the pouring snow and approached the nearest wagon, where he sifted through its contents in search of another set of rations. With an oil lamp in hand, he searched through the darkened interior until he noticed a small child shivering in the corner. Berengar's heart nearly stopped as he gazed upon the nearly frozen face of his own son. It took several moments for this to register in his brain before he checked on the child's condition.

"Alexandros? Why the hell are you here? Screw that. Are you okay? You must be freezing!"

Somehow the boy had managed to stowaway on the journey, most likely hiding among their supplies. Luckily for him, he dressed in thick winter clothing like his parents, and covered himself with a fur blanket. Otherwise, he likely would have died from hypothermia a long time ago.

Berengar did not hesitate, and quickly grabbed hold of the boy, and dragged him back into his tent, instantly awakening his wife with the panic in his voice.

"Babe, get some boiled water running quick!"

Berengar stripped the half-conscious boy from his cold clothes before placing him under the thick covers of his sheets, while his mother gazed in shock at the sight. She could not believe her son had accompanied them on this journey. Naturally, Honoria's maternal instincts kicked into overdrive as she hopped out of bed and prepared a pot of boiling water.

Berengar immediately broke into a nearby first aid pack and pulled out his dry warm compress, which he used to raise the boy's temperature. Eventually Honoria came over with the water, which had cooled down from a simmering boil to a natural heat and fed it to her son. They continued to treat his condition for an hour before he opened his eyes, startled at the sight.

Alexandros gazed upon his mother who was naked, and his father who was fully clothed, staring at him with anxious expressions. He did not know what had occurred since he fell asleep on the wagon in the previous night, but his parents seemed worried out of their minds. Honoria instantly cried as she

realized her child was okay and hugged him tightly. Alexandros only had one question on his mind as he stared at his parents in bewilderment.

"Mommy? Why are you naked?"

Upon seeing that the boy was healthy enough to make such stupid remarks, the woman flicked her son on the head and scolded him.

"What the hell were you thinking stowing away on this journey? You could have gotten yourself killed!"

Berengar was unbelievably furious with his son. He, too, could not hold back his words.

"You worried me half to death, boy! You better have a damned good reason for your actions!"

Between his mother's outrage, and his father's fury, the boy instantly broke out into tears as he cried into his mother's bosom.

"I didn't want to be alone again! You two always leave me behind when you go out on your adventures! For once, I wanted to be a part of your lives!"

Berengar had initially wanted to spank his son until his butt was as red as an apple, but he ultimately decided against it as he heard this. The fact that the boy had thought far enough in advance on how to perfectly plan his escape from the palace without detection of his parents, the guards, or his other family members meant that his intelligence should be commended. Berengar immediately had to question the boy about how he achieved all of this.

"Just answer one question for me boy, how the hell did you manage to follow us this far without being noticed?"

Alexandros looked up at his father as if he didn't fully understand the question. He did not think it was all that impressive. He had observed time and again how Berengar and his troops did not inspect the goods after initially packing them. So he simply made a calculated risk.

"Well, you guys never check on the crates full of ammo after you have packed them, so I snuck inside one of them and followed you on your journey. Is it really that surprising?"

Berengar was astonished. Once the ammo was packed, he never felt a reason to check on it until it was needed. However, what this boy had done was remove several spam cans of munitions in order to insert himself in side. With his size and weight, the difference was unnoticeable, but still the very idea that the boy would put them all in jeopardy just so he could tag along got on Berengar's nerves. He could not help but condemn his child for his recklessness.

"When we get back to Kufstein, you are going to be grounded for half a year!"

Alexandros immediately pouted as he protested this decision.

"That's not fair!"

Berengar flicked the boy on the head before shouting at him.

"You endangered not only your own life, but the lives of everyone here with your foolishness. If you were one of my soldiers, I would have you dragged out back and shot! You are lucky you are my son!"

Honorio placed her forehead into the palm of her hand as she sighed. She could not fathom the difficulties that this presented.

"What the hell do we do now?"

Berengar struggled to come to a decision, but ultimately sighed in defeat.

"I am afraid that we have no choice. We will take him with us. We will just have to place extra emphasis on his protection."

Honorio nodded her head in agreement. It was the most prudent decision. They were so close to their objective and could not easily return to Kufstein. They could only keep a watchful eye on the little stowaway...

#### Chapter 719 Dreams of the Past Part I

Mizuno Ai was in the middle of the library. She had just started attending the United States Military Academy, otherwise known as Westpoint, and was excited to see everything the school offered. Unlike most of the people in this academy, she was the daughter of Japanese immigrants who had spent most of her life in the United States.

What inspired her to join Westpoint? That would be the fact that her grandfather was a veteran of the Imperial Japanese Army, and had often told her stories of his valorous actions when she was still a young child. Sadly, the man had passed away years ago, but Ai honored the man by joining the military of her host nation.

Currently, she was searching for a table to read up on the latest material she had uncovered from her classes. Unfortunately, all the tables were currently occupied. She would either have to find somewhere else to study, or merge with another student. Logic dictated that she would choose a table with the least amount of people, so that they could not bother her while she engaged in her studies.

Luckily for her, there was a table with only a single person sitting at it. She immediately noticed that the young man sitting there had a dreadfully average appearance. For a beauty like her, he was clearly beneath her notice. If Ai had to admit there was one upside to the man, it was the extent of his muscles that were clearly defined beneath his uniform, though this was not unusual in Westpoint as it was, after all, a military academy.

This young man had a perfectly average face, albeit he appeared younger than he actually was. He had strawberry blonde hair and sky-blue eyes in a sporting military cut, and pale white skin. The man was engrossed in a book that turned out to be "The Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli. This was not required reading, but was rather a personal pleasure.

Ai did not pay any more attention to the dreadfully average man than she needed to. Instead, she pulled out a seat and asked if she could sit down at the table he currently occupied.

"May I sit here?"

Julian did not even look up from his book, and silently nodded his head. There was only one reason a woman like Ai would bother him during his free time, and that would be because there was nowhere



else to sit. It would be rude of him to dismiss the girl when he had no actual claim over the table, other than the fact that he sat in this very seat every day between classes.

Seeing that the man was the unsociable type, Ai thought nothing of it, and sat down at the table. She had her own studies to get to, and thus, she pulled out a basic book about military strategies that was necessary for one of her courses. Julian looked up slightly to see what the woman was reading and sneered before gazing down at his own book. This expression did not escape Ai's vision, and she was quick to speak up on her behalf.

"What? Does it displease you that I am reading the required material for my class?"

Julian shook his head before responding to the girl.

"No, I just find some of the text in that book to be antiquated is all. A lot of those tactics are designed to be used against a conventional force, which is not the enemy we have been fighting for the last twenty years. The probability of us engaging in a war against a conventional army during our years of service is slim, unless, of course, you intend to make a career out of being in the army."

Ai was stunned by the man's response. Why was he here in the military academy if he had no plans to stay in the Army for life? Despite his dreadfully average face, she had already found herself curious about the man. She instinctively asked him about his reasoning for attending Westpoint.

"If you don't intend to make a career out of the military, then why are you here?"

Julian looked up from his book once more with a hint of displeasure on his face, before responding to the girl's question in a slightly irritated tone.

"My reasons are my own, and I don't know you well enough to discuss them..."

Ai was furious when she heard this remark. Why was this man so rude to her? She was young, pretty, and intelligent. Everyone had always treated with respect and kindness, and yet this man had shown her nothing but disdain since she sat down. She had half a mind to get up and leave. Yet when she realized there were no other tables available, she calmed herself with a heavy sigh.

This rude man clearly wasn't worth her attention, and thus she quickly got back to work, ignoring him entirely. She would continue to study long into the evening, the entire time Julian was seated across from her, reading a variety of books.

He had long since finished the Prince, and moved another text, this one about the agricultural revolution and the innovations that were made during the era. Throughout the hours spent sitting across from one another, Ai did not witness the man once work on an assignment. She could not help but inquire about his odd behavior.

"Don't you have some actual work to do? Why are you sitting here reading this nonsense?" THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY FREEWEBNOVEL.COM.

It had been several hours since the two of them last spoke, and Julian had entirely forgotten the woman was sitting across from him. When he heard her voice once more, he sighed in frustration. He could not help but question why this woman was bothering him so much. They had never even met before. He quickly voiced his frustration, which only caused Ai to become more irritated with him.

"Why do you care what I do in my free time?"

Ai was confused when she heard that this statement, and instantly questioned his words.

"Free time?"

Julian ultimately placed down his book and glared at the pitiful girl sitting across from him. He explained his situation to her like a parent scolding a young child.

"Yes, free time. I have already completed this week's work. Aside from attending my classes and Cadet activities, I am free to read whatever I choose in the library."

Ai looked at the boy in shock. She initially thought he was just a rude and unruly student who was wasting his time. She could not believe what she had just heard, and quickly interrogated him.

"But... it's only Tuesday?"

Julian immediately looked at the woman with a sense of disdain on his face and responded with a single word.

"And?"

Julian was extremely effective with his time at university. Aside from attending classes and participating in all the required Cadet activities that were forced on him from the military academy, he spent most of his waking hours finishing his work.

Because he had spent his entire youth studying many of the topics that he was required to learn at university, he was able to quickly fill out his homework from simple memory. He usually spent Monday night finishing his week's work, and the rest of his spare time in the library learning about things that interested him.

Naturally, he did not tell this stranger any of this, and simply left her with more questions. His general haughty attitude enraged Ai, and she finally stormed off. In her mind, she had better things to do than mince words with this rude man.

Julian immediately went back to his work, and no longer thought about the strange girl or why she was such a bother to him. He would spend much of the night in the library before returning to his room and getting precisely four hours of sleep.

The next day, when Ai was finished with all of her classes and her cadet activities, she returned to the library to see Julian sitting in the same exact spot, with a different book in his hands. Despite the fact that there were many open tables this time, the girl chose to sit next to him once more.

The moment Julian saw this, he became frustrated, but he decided to bite his tongue. He wanted to interact with this girl as little as possible, and as long as she kept her questions to herself, he did not wish to provoke her.

Ai continued to do her necessary school work and decided that she would compete with this strange man. If he could finish all of his week's worth in one day, then clearly she could do the same. Until now, she had made sure to have ample spare time so that she could relax, as she knew the grind through

Westpoint would be a difficult one. However, the sheer look of disdain this man had given her, as if she were some common pleb, inspired her to prove she was better than him.

Immediately after thinking this, Itami awoke from her dream, with an expression of shock on her face. She did not know why she was dreaming of her first encounter with Julian, but it instantly made her depressed.

She had not thought about that memory in some time and wore a bitter smile on her face when she realized she was initially interested in Julian because, unlike everyone else in her life who treated her as a prodigy; he looked at her as if she was beneath him.

She was unsure if she ever convinced the arrogant man that she was his equal, but the disturbed expression on Julian's face when she sat down across from her made the woman giggle. After some time, she soon fell back to sleep. This time, she would not dream of the past.

#### Chapter 720 Stumbling Upon the World Tree

Days had passed, and the blizzard that trapped Berengar, Honoria, and their young child vanished. Because of this, the trio and the soldiers that protected them made their way closer to the target of their covert operation. Immediately upon entering the borders that surrounded the dense woods, Berengar felt the presence of the supernatural.

At first glance, this wooded area was nothing special. It was a small forest of pine trees covered in snow. However, there was something eerie about it which caused Berengar to feel unsettled in his gut. He knew he had found the right place. Thus, he quickly voiced his concerns to the men beneath his command.

"Keep your heads on a swivel boys, we do not know what is in these woods..."

The men weren't aware of the supernatural, and thought that the Kaiser was being overly cautious, still they checked their weapons to see if they were loaded. After confirming this was the case, they mounted their bayonets to the barrel of their rifles. Honoria was especially cautious, as she was aware of the potential dangers that she and her family would encounter. She raised her young son on her back and lectured him while loading a shell into the chamber of her trench gun.

"Alexandros, you must behave yourself. Stay on my back at all times! Whatever you do, do not go wandering off in the woods!"

Alexandros gazed upon his mother's actions with a hint of wonder in his eyes. He too wanted to be armed in this moment, but unfortunately he was too young to be afforded such a privilege. All he could do was nod his head in agreement. He was already in enough trouble for stowing away. The last thing he wanted was to add more to his punishment.

Berengar pulled out his P25 pistol, which was based on the luger, and loaded a round into its chamber before marching forward into the woodlands with an excited expression on his face. Perhaps it was because of the boon of courage he had received from Baduhenna, but he felt no fear as he charged into the potentially dangerous woodland.

His soldiers were quick to follow behind as they rushed forward into the unknown. The moment the company of elite soldiers entered the woods, they noticed the trees appeared far taller than they should be. From an outsider's perspective, these pine trees were fifty to eighty feet tall and covered in snow.

However, the moment they stepped foot in the forest, the length of their trunks appeared to be in the hundreds, if not thousands, of feet. It was impossible to know for sure as a thick fog shrouded the vision of the soldiers, making it difficult to see even a few feet ahead of them, let alone the size of the massive trees.

Aside from the sheer difference in size of the surrounding trees, there was not a hint of snow in sight, and the weather within the dense woods was quite mild. So much so that the men were feeling uncomfortable in their thick winter attire.

When Berengar gazed upon the massive tree trunks, he felt as if he should have worn a helmet like his soldiers had wisely chosen to do. There was no telling the damage a pine cone could do to his noggin if it fell on him from such a height. He instantly turned around to order one man to give him his helmet, only to find that he was truly, and utterly alone.

This sudden turn of event shocked Berengar. Just a moment ago, his wife, young son and a company of his Imperial Guard flanked his sides. Now he appeared totally alone in the mists. He quickly called out to the others, hoping they were just hidden in the fog.

"Honor! Alexandros! Is there anyone out there?"

Shockingly, a feminine, yet foreign voice called out to him from among the mist. However, its tone was far from pleasant, instead it sounded more like a hunter who was stalking its prey.

"They can't hear you... You are all alone, here with only me to keep you company..."

Berengar immediately reacted to this by raising his pistol towards the location of the hostile voice. He did not hesitate to fire a shot into the mists, hoping to injure whoever was stalking him. Unfortunately, all Berengar saw was a pair of glowing golden eyes fade away into the mist, and the sound of shrill laughter echo in the surrounding air.

"You think you can harm me with such methods? If you want to see your wife and child again, I suggest you seek me out. That is, if you can manage to find me..."

The mocking tone in the woman's voice outraged the Kaiser, causing him to fire another few shots randomly into the mist, all while he called out to the owner of the taunting voice.

"Who are you? What do you want from me?"

This time there was utter silence, and Berengar had no choice but to trudge through the mists, hoping to find the others. While Berengar cautiously made his way through the misty woodlands, Honor! and Alexandros were held captive by a young girl who appeared to be in her early teenage years.

This girl had a blindfold over her eyes, and shockingly resembled Adela during her younger years, with the signature golden twintails the young empress sported in her youth. Unlike Adela, this young girl was dressed in the fashion of a viking woman, with a fur-lined cloak adorned over her dress. When Honor!

gazed upon the sight of this foreign woman, she could not help but assume that she was Adela and instantly voiced her confusion aloud.

"Adela? How is this possible?"

The woman frowned as she realized that the Greco-Roman woman had misidentified her and reacted to Honoria's confusion with stern words.

"Foolish child, do you think I am some petty queen? I am far more ancient than you can fathom. You should show me some respect, especially since I control your fate!"

This overwhelming pride coming from a woman that looked like the young empress caused Honoria to smile awkwardly. Whoever this strange woman was, she definitely had the same vibe as Adela, especially before she became more tolerant towards Berengar's other women. She did not take the woman's rant about controlling her fate seriously. She assumed the woman meant that she could choose whether or not to kill her, not that she was an actual weaver of fate.

Honoria gazed around and realized that she and her son were gathered at the root of a massive tree whose length extended far beyond her line of sight. Even without the fog, she could not tell the height of this tree. It was almost as if its vast trunk protruded into the universe itself. She inspected the blind woman as she drew a pail of water from the nearby well and use it to nourish the large tree.

This was no normal water, for it appeared as if it were made from the cosmos itself. Tiny specks of light littered the surface of the pitch black water as it poured onto the massive trunk of the tree, causing it its vines to grow in size.

Honoria could hardly believe her eyes when she saw this. She had so many questions, but the woman did not appear to be friendly. The strange woman abruptly halted her actions and put the bucket of water aside while a smile curved itself upon her pretty pink lips.

"It would appear that he has found us..."

Moments after saying this, Berengar forced his way through the brush and appeared in front of the trio with his pistol in his hands. When he saw his wife and son safe and sound, he let out a sigh of relief. In the next moment, he noticed the blind woman and raised his brow in astonishment as he called out to the woman in confusion.

"Adela?"

The woman sighed as she shook her head before revealing her identity.

"The name is Wyrđ. The reason I resemble your little wife is that I have chosen this form, knowing it would be more appealing to you. I am honestly surprised that you have found your way here so quickly. Then again, the very fact that you exist in this world to begin with defies fate itself. "

Berengar slowly approached his wife and child. As he did so, he cautiously kept his line of sight on Wyrđ, afraid that she might do something drastic. He had an inkling in his mind about who this woman really was and what kind of power she wielded. It would be unwise to provoke a weaver of fate. After ensuring that his wife and son were alright, Berengar lowered his weapon and asked the immediate question in his mind to the small blind girl.

"And what would a norn want with me? More importantly, what have you done to my men?"

Honoria did not immediately react to this, as she was unaware of the Germanic mythology that her husband was referencing. However, the woman named Wyrð smiled once more while she spoke with a less hostile voice than she had during their first encounter in the woods.

"Oh, I assure you, my sisters are keeping them company. Do not worry, they are unharmed and are merely sleeping. They will not remember this chance encounter. I am curious, though, about how you found us. I did not foresee your visit to the world tree. That old bastard has seriously caused my sisters and I much trouble by bringing you into this world. You should not be here. Your very existence in this world has upset the balance of fate itself!"

Berengar gazed up at the massive tree in astonishment. The woman had just called this the world tree, meaning he was standing at the very root of the universe. Or at least according to Germanic mythology. He could not help but kneel down at the sight of Yggdrasil and show his respect. This action caused the norn named Wyrð to smile even more fervently. She sighed heavily as she gazed upon the otherworlder with a sense of pity, mostly for herself.

"It appears you know how to show proper respect. Whatever your reason for coming here, I suppose I shall hear you out. After all, if my sisters and I were to get rid of you, I am certain that old bastard would take out his wrath on us."

Ever since Berengar had first reincarnated into this world, he had many questions on his mind. Now that he was standing face to face with a weaver of fate, he knew this was his best chance to answer them all. He had the desire to give Linde all the love she could ever want, after her hunt had led him to the world tree.