

Steel 771

Chapter 771 The Eastern Front Part I

Vászoly György stood at the head of his army. By Hungarian law, he was technically considered a nobleman of higher standing within the Kingdom, but it was difficult to define his actual place in the hierarchy. After all, the Hungarians did not exactly have a complex system of hereditary titles, unlike western Europe. At least not at this point in time. However, in terms of wealth and power, the man was akin to a Grand Duke, practically a monarch in his own right, and distantly related to the Royal Family.

It was because of this that the Hungarian monarch had tasked him to lead one of the five armies that were sent to war against the Byzantine Empire. Unfortunately, the campaign through the Dinaric Alps resulted in a stalemate, where the Byzantine Forces under the command of Strategos Palladius Angelus had entrenched their position and halted all Hungarian advances.

In truth, György was disappointed in how little he contributed to the war effort. However, just as the Crusade for the Holy Land ended, Berengar the Accursed declared war on the Catholic World, giving the man a chance to redeem himself. He had been away from home for too long to know that his son Viktor had sent his only surviving daughter to Kufstein.

Because he was unaware that his daughter lie in the heart of his enemy's Empire, György had every desire to set the Reich ablaze. The King of Hungary had spared no expense and drafted all the peasants he could manage into the army. He also equipped them with black powder weapons and the best armor money could buy.

Though the peasants of this army had limited training in the use of their weapons and battlefield tactics, they were now all battle-hardened veterans from their conflict with the Byzantines. It was because of this, György believed that his army of one hundred thousand men would smash through the German borders. After all, this was just one of five armies of such size, and the others would be assaulting different sectors of the enemy's defenses at the same time.

The German Border Guard was sparsely spread throughout the entire fatherland. However, Berengar had deployed a significant number of German soldiers from the Army to reinforce the eastern defenses. After days of scouting out the German lines, György found the perfect location to strike.

At a particular section of the German Border, there was roughly a brigade worth of soldiers stationed in its defense, and he believed that with his overwhelming numbers, he could charge through the gap and enter the fatherland. He prayed that the other four armies found locations similar to this.

What he did not realize was not only was Palladius in pursuit of his army, but the German National Railway was completed, and the German soldiers could easily deploy from other sections of the border quite rapidly. Thus, after setting his sights on the German border in the distance, György gave the order to march in its direction.

"Forward march!"

Unknowingly, the moment György and his army appeared within the vicinity of the border, a group of Jaegers who were hiding in a nearby brush spotted their location and swiftly reported back to the nearest command with the Hungarian Army's coordinates. How did they do this? Berengar had ensured

that every Jaeger team was issued a portable radiotelegraph, which could be used by a trained individual to relay information back to the main forces.

Thus, after reporting the coordinates of the Hungarian Army to the section of border that they would soon attack, the Jaeger team absconded from the scene, allowing the artillery strike they had just called in to take place. This also acted as a warning, which permitted the Colonel in charge of this section of the border to call for reinforcements.

With the crackling thunder of artillery fire, the horses which the Hungarian cavalry were mounted upon became spooked. They trotted back and forth, and bucked wildly in an attempt to throw their riders off of them. However, it only took a moment for the explosive blasts to disrupt the Hungarian army.

György could hardly believe that his troops were being attacked. They were in the middle of a mountain ravine and were well over six kilometers away from the enemy defenses. Just how did they manage to attack him? Since his cavalry could no longer ride their horses, he issued an order he never thought he would have to in his life.

"Dismount and charge on foot! God wills it!"

After saying this, György charged forward on horseback towards the enemy border. His army thought that the man was insane, but when they halted, another nobleman called out to them and challenged them to face their fears.

"What are you, a bunch of women? They can't kill all of us. Let's move!"

This challenge to their manhood caused the men in the army to suicidally charge through the artillery fire, which resulted in thousands of men being blasted into bits. However, they were right about one thing, the artillery on this section of border was not enough to kill them all.

Unfortunately, artillery was not the least of their worries. The moment the Hungarian army crossed into the thousand meter depth that was no-man's-land, Gatling guns fired them upon. Miraculously, György remained entirely unharmed, despite the men behind him soaking up bullets like a sponge, and he continued to charge forward towards the German trenches.

The man had a great hope in his eyes, because despite the losses he had suffered, he and his men could still overwhelm the border defenses, or so he thought. However, the moment he stepped foot into no-man's-land, he activated a land mine.

Before he could even realize what had happened, the mine bounced into the air before exploding, sending a thousand ball bearings in all directions, and blowing the Hungarian nobleman apart! The projectiles practically saw the man's midsection in half as he died on the spot.

When the German defenders saw this, they screamed in laughter, and hollered taunts at the Hungarian army who foolishly rushed head first into a minefield. Now that the enemy had entered their trap, the Germans began to unleash fire from rifles and Gatling guns alike, cutting down those unfortunate enough to get in their sights.

The death of the Hungarian commander came as a shock to the other members of his army, but they did not know what had killed him. They expected it to be another artillery strike, thus they boldly rushed

forward into the minefield, where every other step a poor unfortunate soul would have his life claimed by the terror buried beneath the surface.

The amount of landmines that the German Empire manufactured over the past few years for the sake of establishing border security is unknown, but on the eastern front alone, it was expected to be in the millions. After all, they were relatively simple devices to manufacture, and German Industrial output was massive.

Before the Hungarian Army could even reach the trenches, they were being blown apart left and right. If that wasn't bad enough, artillery still pounded those in the rear, while Gatling guns and single shot bolt action rifles continued to spray their bullets at them in an overwhelming fog of lead.

It did not take long before the men of the Hungarian army were too afraid to continue their advance. But they were well within the range of artillery, and thus they were left with only one choice. Press forward. However, was such a thing so easy?

The infantry soon found themselves struggling to navigate their way through the labyrinth of barbed wire was erected across no-man's-land. To make matters worse, the Germans designed the barbed wire defenses in such a way as to lead the enemy army through the area where landmines lie. It was a complete and total massacre.

The Germans continued to cheer as they ruthlessly fired upon the Hungarian infantry who exploded every couple of steps. The sight of their comrades blowing to pieces in front of them had a significant effect on the minds of those who had gathered for this assault.

One soldier, who was too petrified to move forward, simply knelt down and prayed to God for his safety. However, before he could finish the sign of the cross, a bullet struck through his bascinet and splattered his brains all over the place. Eventually, the Hungarian army lost their resolve to continue the fight press and retreated, but by then three-fourths of their army had been wiped out, and they were still stuck in a minefield.

The moment they realized that by running backwards they would achieve the same result as charging forward, hundreds of men simply lied down and accepted their fates. Not daring to move a muscle in fear that they might explode. The sheer hopelessness of the no-man's-land defeated the army before they could even reach the trenches.

As for the Germans, they never got tired of firing their weapons, and continued to open fire on the enemy until the no-man's-land was nothing but a sea of corpses. The five thousand men who defended this section of border did not even need the reinforcements they had called for. For the vast ocean of landmines had done their work for them.

This would be a common sight in the German-Catholic War. There was a reason Berengar was so ruthless with his border security, it was not to keep refugees and illegal immigrants out, but entire armies. Who would dare to walk through the no-man's-land that surrounded the fatherland? Only a fool or a madman would make such a desperate gamble.

The death of Vászoly György, along with a fifth of the Hungarian army, would have dire consequences on the eastern front. However, perhaps the most important development that would come from this immense loss of life was the fact that the young girl Vászoly Noemi had lost her father in this suicidal

charge. When news of her father's death reached Noemi's ears, the girl would violate the Linde's orders, and approach Hans for comfort. After all, she needed her precious "little brother" to get over her grief.

Chapter 772 Countermeasures Against the Threat in the West

Itami sat within the confines of her personal quarters. She wore nothing but a silk robe while her snow white hair was glistening with water. For the fifth time in the past forty-eight hours, she had just come out of her personal hot spring. She was lucky to have such a luxury, as it helped her cope with the stress she was currently facing.

After finding out that there was another reincarnator in the west whose name was Berengar von Kufstein, and that his Empire was quite possibly as advanced as her own. Itami had been plagued with migraines, which was a common symptom when she was especially stressed.

She did not know who this Berengar von Kufstein was, what his personality was like, or the extent of his ambitions. However, she could already guess that if the Reich was as advanced as her Empire was, then they posed a significant threat not only to her rule, but her very existence.

Since such a powerful state existed on the other side of the world that could challenge her, she now had to speed up her plans to invade Korea, Hokkaido, and the Ryukyu Kingdom. After all, Germany had ample supplies of iron, something she was severely lacking in. Which meant that they likely already had ironclad vessels, which she could not afford to construct right now.

However, more importantly, Itami needed a proxy, someone she could empower to cause problems for this Kaiser's ambitions in the east. It was clear that he was sooner or later going to get involved in India, at least if the rumors were true. She doubted whoever this man was, that he was so kindhearted as to protect an exiled Emperor and his sister, without having some form of ulterior motive.

Thus, Itami could conclude that Berengar was intending to overthrow this self proclaimed Emperor Chandra Tomara, and replace him with a puppet in the Anangpur Empire. Most likely, the man had the plans to install this puppet as Emperor of the entire Indian Subcontinent. At the very least, that was what she would do if she were in his position.

It was actually quite scary how accurately Itami could predict Berengar's exact plans, simply due to how similar their thought processes were. She knew nothing about Berengar, or his mindset, but by simply preparing to fight an enemy that was as intelligent as she was, she had completely anticipated Berengar's plans for India, and thus planned to counteract them.

The young Empress quickly took out a map she had drawn, which included her approximation of The German Empire, and how she perceived it would look. Essentially, she drew an Empire that was WWI Germany with the inclusion of WWI Austria. After all, Itami knew that some of their weapons were being manufactured within the city of Innsbruck, which was an Austrian city.

While this wasn't entirely accurate, as Berengar's empire controlled the Baltic states, part of the lowlands, and Bohemia. It was enough to give her an idea of the natural resources that the Reich had at the moment. As Itami was in the middle of editing her map, a knock resounded on her door, before the Minister of trade's voice appeared on the other end.

"Itami-Sama, I have important news to bring you from trade with the Anangpur Empire, won't you open up?"

Upon hearing about an area that was of particular interest to her, Itami rushed to the door and opened it, where she gazed upon the old man who helped foster trade between Japan and foreign nations. In his hands was a can of corned beef hash, which had a painting of the dish on its label.

Though it was written in German, and therefore she couldn't understand its contents, Itami knew what Corned beef hash looked like, and immediately grabbed hold of the can and stared at it with disbelief. This can of food was simple proof that not only had the German Empire begun canning food, but it had also been to the New World, otherwise where the hell would they get the potatoes for this dish?

Itami stared in disbelief for several moments while the old man went on a winded story about how his merchants got their hands on the can. However, Itami didn't hear any of it. She only desired to know for certain if the dish contained potatoes. Thus, she immediately called out for her servants, ignoring her minister of trade completely. When one of her maids arrived, Itami quickly gave her an order.

"Bring this to the kitchen, and have them cook it for me. I desire to taste this dish as soon as possible!"

The maid could see the stern look in Itami's blood-red eyes, and quickly bowed her head before absconding to the kitchen where the canned meal was prepared for the young empress, and brought to her quarters. While she was waiting, she dismissed the minister.

"I thank you for bringing this to my attention, but I need to study this item carefully. If you will wait until after I have eaten its contents, I will speak with you then."

The old man bowed his head and agreed to Itami's request before leaving her alone. After a while, another servant brought the corned beef hash to her room, where she gazed upon the Potatoes with disbelief. There was no doubting it. There were potatoes in this dish, still she tasted it just to make sure, and sure enough the familiar taste of potatoes entered her mouth.

Itami was furious. Though she had plans for the new world, it would appear that someone had beaten her to it. If that was the case, then she could not underestimate just how much of an advantage this other reincarnator had over her.

The new world was a treasure trove of untouched natural resources. If this Berengar von Kufstein had already established colonies there, it was simply impossible to guess how advanced his Empire was.

After all, the simple proof of how much further ahead Berengar was over her was the fact that he had factories capable of mass producing canned food, and he was selling them abroad. She could not fathom how vast the man's food surplus must be by now.

This news changed everything. It meant that Berengar's troops had much better rations than hers. Hell, it meant his people were much better fed than hers. This gave Germany's armies a tremendous advantage. Itami was beginning to feel another migraine creeping up on her as she thought of all of this.

It was clear what she must do. She had to arm the Bengal Empire with sufficient weapons that could cause Germany some grief, and buy her some time. If the Bengal Empire united India before Berengar's puppet could, then he would have a hard time enforcing the claim that Dharya had.

However, Itami knew that matchlocks would have no effect on German troops, and thus if she wanted to empower the Bengals she would need to sell them her current issue weapons. Which she did not have a problem with, as by the time she needed to enforce her influence over India, she would have much better weapons for her troops.

Thus, in that moment, Itami decided it would be prudent to visit the Bengal Empire and negotiate and arms deal with the Bengal Army. One that would change the political landscape of India forever. However, if she were going to do this, then she needed to be discreet.

Itami needed to make sure the weapons could not be traced back to her. The worst possible scenario would be Germany finding out about her existence, and declaring war on her before she was ready. Because of this, she decided to manufacture a new line of weapons that were from a foreign design, and made use of the Devanagari script for its markings.

After some consideration, Itami chose the 1881 Marlin rifle chambered in 45-70 government. The reason for this weapon was because she honestly did not know what state of firepower the German Army had access to, and because of this, she desired a repeating rifle to be safe. However, since she could only manufacture black powder weapons at the moment, it made her repeating rifle options extremely limited.

She also planned to re-chamber the Gatling guns that were currently in production into the .45-70 cartridge and sell those to the Bengal Army. As well as introduce an 1873 Colt Single Action army, chambered in .45 long colt as a sidearm.

As for the Armstrong guns her army currently used as artillery? They were a British design, and there was no way they could be linked back to Japan, so long as she made sure the markings on these guns were in Devanagari.

Thus, Itami spent another sleepless night as she prepared her countermeasures against Berengar von Kufstein and his German Army. When German troops finally entered India, it would surprise them to see the level of firepower at the Bengal Army's disposal. Or so Itami thought.

The reality was that while Itami was investigating the German Empire; she had left behind traces of her existence. After all, trade between India and Japan was not supposed to be extensive during this time period. The more she interfered in the region, the more it would catch the interest of the Reich's Queen Spider, whose agents kept a watchful eye on the Anangpur Empire at all times.

Chapter 773 Inventing the Two-Way Radio

While Berengar and his army may be at war. The scientists and engineers of the Reich were hard at work within the safety of the fatherland. Their job was to research new technologies, and develop new methods to not only wage war but also to advance their civilization. Within the research and development department of the Kufstein Royal Armory sat a young scientist who specialized in researching radiocommunications.

For some time now this young man who went by the name of Reichart Banwartz had been working with his department to improve upon the radiotelegraph that Berengar had invented which was currently employed by the German Government, and was the primary means of communication within the borders of the Reich.

While the Radiotelegraph was a useful invention, and helped relay information across the vast territory of the Empire, it had several disadvantages, among them was the length of time it took to convey information.

Recently Reichart helped develop the portable radio-telegraph which was used in limited capacity among Jaegers and Jagdkommandos. However, this method of communication between units embedded in the field and the Command HQs had proven troublesome.

The lack of instant communication between Jaegers and HQ was becoming a problem in the field. Specifically regarding artillery strikes and relaying intelligence. It took some time to type out the information necessary to report an enemy's position. Because of this artillery was not as effective as it could be.

Reichart sought to remedy this by devising a way to use verbal communication across radio waves. He had been hard at work on this project along with his friend and fellow researcher in his spare time, and together the two scientists made use of different technologies that were still being researched by other departments. However, after concluding his research into the portable radiotelegraph, Reichart was now working full time on this project.

Today, the young scientist would finally have a breakthrough in his efforts. In order to create the two-way radio, Reichart had first needed to make use of telephones. Luckily for him, such technology was already being researched and developed by another department. At least in the form of wired communications.

Which thanks to the way the Reich handled its research and development, all he needed to do was submit a request to that department, as well as a detailed reason on why he needed their research, and they were forced to hand it over to him.

Berengar had established a system of research and development across his Empire that put the collective goals of the Reich ahead of the individual rights of intellectual property. Because of this, all information was shared freely between any scientist employed by the Reich.

Theoretically, if Reichart could prove a need for information from the Chemistry department, then he could request access to their classified research and, assuming it was approved, the research would be in his hands within a few days. Which is exactly what he had done to receive the current battery technology that he made use of for this project.

After much experimentation with radiocommunications, Reichart had stumbled upon the VHF FM spectrum, and had even created a prototype two way radio which he was currently experimenting with. This was one of two prototypes that existed, with the other being in the hands of another researcher who sat in a different laboratory within the building.

A two-way radio made use of an FM transmitter, receiver, and antenna. His current prototype was powered by a five volt nickel cadmium battery, and made use of the VHF spectrum. After agreeing upon a single frequency to communicate with, Reichart pressed the push to talk button he had created and spoke into the microphone that lie on his experimental headset.

"Testing... Testing... One, two, three... This is Reichart Banwartz. Can you hear me, Curt?"

For several moments, there was nothing but static on the other end, which immediately caused Reichart to sigh in defeat, however just when he was about to take off his headset and go back to the drawing board, he heard a familiar voice call out to him.

"I hear you loud and clear, Reichart. Congratulations, your invention is a success. I don't mean to flatter you too much, but this technology of yours has the potential to change the world!"

Reichart could not contain his excitement, and immediately jumped out of his chair and pumped his fist in the air. After all his hard work, he finally had a working prototype. After taking a moment to calm himself, he sat back down and pressed the push to talk button once more.

"Understood. I look forward to working with you on perfecting this technology!"

After saying this, he sat back in his chair and exhaled heavily. The adrenaline in his veins did not allow his heart to calm itself. Instead, he was filled with energy as he thought about all the different practical uses for this technology.

Instant communication among military units was just the beginning. He knew that the sky was the limit with radiocommunications. Of course, he did not understand just how many fields this technology could be applied to, but he had a strong desire to find out.

After a few moments, his fellow researcher Curt barged into the room. There was an excited smile on his face as he held two beers in his hands. He handed one off to Reichart and clanked their bottles together before hugging the man.

"When the Kaiser learns of what we have done here today, you can bet your ass we are going to be rewarded for our efforts! I can imagine it now, a title of nobility, an order of merit perhaps! Ours names will go down in history for this!"

Reichart was equally excited. This project of his was something he and Curt had been working on in their spare times until relatively recently. With the budget allocated to research and development, many scientists were allowed to pursue their intellectual curiosities freely, and with the sharing of research, many new inventions were popping up left and right.

This was something Reichart was thinking of when he remembered hearing details about another project in the material sciences department. After taking a sip from his beer, he quickly spoke about what he had heard to Curt.

"I hear the boys in material science found out how to make a new metal! It's called Aluminum I think? Apparently, there's this mineral called bauxite that they found in New Swabia. Our scientists have found a way to process the bauxite into this so-called aluminum, which apparently has many applications.

I'm telling you, it's the dawn of a new era, and none of this would have been possible without the Kaiser and his public education system. It's been ten years, and now there's an entire generation of young minds nurtured in science and mathematics that the Kaiser has provided us with. It is truly amazing when you think about it."

Curt smiled when he heard about material science's exploits, however he leaned in and whispered something to Reichart, which immediately caused the man to feel like he was defeated in some way.

"Don't tell anyone about this. After all, it is so classified that I can't even get my hands on the research behind it. But from what I hear, Engineering is developing a new flying device, they're calling it an air ship.

I don't know too many details, but you know how we have just started drilling for oil and natural gas, right? Well, apparently under the kaiser's instruction, the boys in engineering have discovered a gas called helium which they intend to use as the lifting gas for these airships. Aside from that, I know nothing about the project."

Upon hearing this, Reichart was astonished. He could hardly believe his ears when he heard the word airship. The eternal dream of mankind, to fly in the air, would soon be a reality. The young scientist instantly shook his head as he took another sip of his beer and laughed. This immediately caused Curt's brow to furrow as he questioned the man's sanity.

"What's so funny?"

Reichart quickly motioned around him and commented on the state of the Reich.

"To think that ten years ago our families were toiling in the fields with our bare hands, and now we will be sending men into the air? It's unbelievable isn't it? I mean, there's literally only one man who we can thank for how far we have come in such a short period.

As much as people revere the Kaiser, the overwhelming majority of them truly underestimate just how much he has done for us. If not for him, we would all still be a bunch of filthy peasants, breaking our backs in the mud without the slightest inclination about science and mathematics. Hell, I doubt we would even be able to read and write.

No wonder the Papacy and the foreign powers hate him so much, he single-handedly overthrew the balance of power. In a world without the Kaiser, the Pope would still be the most influential person in the west. Now he's nothing but the figurehead of an ancient and dying religion."

Upon hearing this, Curt chuckled before raising his beer in the air for a toast.

"To the Kaiser! Without him, we would be nothing!"

Reichart smiled and repeated the toast before swallowing down the rest of his beer. After a brief celebration, the two men quickly got back to work, where they intended to expand upon their prototypes and make functioning devices for military and civil applications.

Chapter 774 Invasion of the Lowlands

Lieutenant Herman von Habsburg stood within the ranks of the Second Brigade of the First Corps of the Imperial German Army. The Imperial German Army operated under the modern concept of a Brigade Combat Team. Meaning that each brigade was capable of supporting itself in any conflict. After all, a unit of roughly five thousand German soldiers could defeat most enemy forces in this world.

A Brigade Combat Team made use of two infantry battalions: a cavalry battalion, an artillery battalion, an engineering battalion, and a support battalion. Because of this organized structure, the First Corps of the Imperial German Army had dispatched its individual brigades across the Lowlands to secure

different objectives. Currently, the Second Brigade was passing through a small town on the borders of the Duchy of Burgundy.

It had been years since Herman's father, the infamous Count Lothar, was executed for his treasonous acts. Though he had never forgiven his elder sister Linde for betraying her family, the young man held no grudge against her husband, the current Kaiser of the German Empire.

At first, Herman despised Berengar and held him responsible for his father's fate, but as the years passed, and Innsbruck became a major manufacturing city, the noble house of Habsburg-Innsbruck had risen to heights that Lothar would have never dreamt of. This caused the young man to view his brother-in-law in a different light.

Linde was the Second Empress of the Reich, and Herman's elder brother Liutbert was a wealthy businessman, who had made a fortune for himself presiding over Innsbruck and its massive industrial sector. With feudalism being a distant memory, Liutbert's direct control of the city vanished, but the Habsburg name still held monumental influence in the region.

As for Herman himself, he had gone through the route of military service. When the German Cadet Corps was established, he was among the first to enter its ranks. It was because of this he was given a head start in military leadership, and found himself becoming a commissioned officer without needing to go through the Academy.

Currently, the young man, who was not even twenty, was marching through the lowlands on his first military campaign. At the moment, the Duchy of Burgundy held control over a large chunk of the lowlands, which were populated mostly by Ethnic Germans. Though Herman had initially expected stiff resistance from the local population, reality was something else entirely.

As Herman marched through the border town, it surprised him to see that the people were not fearful of him or his fellow soldiers. They did not hide in their homes and wait for the army to pass, nor did the parents cover their children's eyes in fears that the sight of the enemy army might traumatize them. Instead, they gathered in the streets and greeted the German Army as if they were liberators, come to save them from their primitive feudal existence.

The town folk gathered and cheered as the German Army continued to march on. Herman could hardly believe his eyes. Weren't these people Catholic? Were they not supposed to be brainwashed into hating the Reich? Why were they so happy about this annexation?

The truth was that although the people of this region were still officially Catholic; they had long since been influenced by German propaganda efforts. Since the Unification of Germany a few years prior, the Kaiser had invested heavily into funneling propaganda into the lowlands. Though Berengar was the one to sign off on this propaganda mission, it was the brainchild of Adela who worked hard to see the people of the lowlands converted to the German Reformation in secret.

The usual means of leaflets were useless among a population that could neither read nor write. Thus, Agents of the Reich had infiltrated every town and city across the lowlands, and spread word of the German Reformation, and what life in the Reich was really like.

By the time Berengar's troops invaded the region, the people were already willing to accept their annexation. The only thing standing in the way of the Kaiser's will were the local lords and their garrisons, who refused to give up the wealth and power they possessed.

However, there was only so much they could do when faced with the overwhelming will of the people they ruled over. There was also the fact that German artillery was so overwhelming they could bring down a castle's walls with a single barrage. With the armies of Burgundy still abroad, nobody was willing to lift a finger to save the power that the Burgundian noble houses still held in the land.

A young girl who was in the middle of her teenage years held a basket of flowers in her hand, and was now handing them to the German Soldiers who passed her by. Despite her kindness, not a single soldier had accepted her gift. After all, they were still wary of the locals because they had heard stories about false gestures like these leading to the deaths of soldiers in the Iberia theatre.

The girl was getting depressed after another soldier passed her by without even looking at her. When Herman saw this, he sighed before stepping out of formation, where he stood in front of the girl. He wore a warm smile on his face as he opened up his hand and expressed his gratitude towards the girl.

"Did you pick these yourself? They're lovely. Might I have one?"

The girl instantly blushed when she saw the handsome young man accept her flower. She quickly recovered from her stupor and nodded her head in silence before handing Herman a white flower, which he pinned to his tunic. With a smile on his face, Herman thanked the girl for her kindness.

"Thank you, I shall cherish this gift... Now if you will excuse me, I have to get back to formation."

Once Herman had accepted the flower, the other soldiers sighed in relief, knowing that it was not a trap. Since an officer had taken the initiative to accept the girl's gift, nobody would complain if the rest of them did as well, and because of that, every soldier who was on the far left of the formation would receive a flower until the girl ran out.

It was not just this unit that had encountered a situation like this. All across the lowlands, the people greeted their German occupiers with open arms. Many of them believed it was only a matter of time until this day happened, and were patiently awaiting it.

While the Reich had been rapidly modernized, to the point that even the poorest of its citizens lived better than the nobility of the neighboring realms, the lowlands were the one speck of German soil that was left out of the prosperity. Naturally, the people were aggrieved by this loss when they heard of how the German people east of the Rhine lived.

Herman was thinking about this as the Second Brigade came to a stop in the village. Their objective in coming here was to force the local Lord to surrender, and recognize that his lands had been annexed by the German Empire. Naturally, while Herman was interacting with the flower girl, the Colonel in charge of the Second Brigade had sent a messenger to negotiate with the local lord.

Like the barbarian that the feudal lord was, he reacted to the German demands, severed the head of the messenger before throwing it over the walls. The moment German blood was spilled on foreign soil, the gloves came off, and the Artillery battalion quickly set up their guns outside the castle's walls.

It was Herman's job to shoo away the local townsfolk, so they did not get caught up in the conflict. He wore a friendly smile as he pushed the townsfolk away.

"Return to your homes, your Lord has chosen death rather than submission. This will be over shortly. I promise you that if you return to your homes, this skirmish won't affect you."

The townsfolk nodded and accepted this condition. The German soldiers appeared to be treating them cordially, so much so that they were actually concerned about the safety of the locals. This was a kindness afforded by the Reich exclusively to ethnic Germans. Without incident, the town's folk took shelter in their homes, though they shivered in fright when the explosive fount of the cannons roared in the air.

A single barrage was all that was necessary to bring down the gatehouse. Allowing the German soldiers to rush through with their bayonets affixed. Herman had returned to the front lines and was at the head of the charge, as he aimed the sights of his G22 rifle onto his first target and pulled the trigger without hesitation.

A volley of rifle fire pelted the front lines of those foolish defenders who dared to block the path of German vengeance. After the enemy vanguard was annihilated in a single second, the remainder of the garrison cast their primitive weapons aside and allowed the Germans to advance into the castle unhindered. The Burgundian Lord's men had given up on him before they could even attack the enemy.

Before long, the foolish nobleman was dragged to his home, and brought before the Colonel, who simply smirked at the bastard as he drew his P25 pistol from its holster and plugged a round in the man's skull. There was no need for such foolish nobility in the Reich.

With this Lord's execution, the German armies were quickly on the march once more. Though this town had been secured for the Reich, there were plenty of others that needed to be annexed. Thus, the ten brigades of the First Corps were constantly on the move as they rapidly secured the lowlands, and dethroned the Burgundian nobility who reigned over them.

Chapter 775 curse You Merciful Poseidon!

Admiral Reitz Bettinger stood on the bow of his Ironclad frigate. The rain was pouring heavily upon the Mediterranean sea, and the German fleet was caught in the middle of a giant storm. However, the young Admiral was unconcerned with the weather, instead he had a single goal in mind.

Reitz was a man who was among the first members of the Austrian Navy, which over the years had since transformed into the Imperial German Navy, also referred to as the Kriegsmarine. He was considered a protégé by many and had trained under the tutelage of the previous Grand Admiral.

While the heavens cried upon the seas, perhaps in an act of grief for what would soon occur; Reitz gazed through his binoculars into the distance, where he saw his target rapidly approaching. The poor souls who would drown in the salty sea on this miserable day were the crusaders who stood on board the Catholic Armada.

Currently, Reitz's fleet is composed of merely ten vessels. Yet these ten ships were all ironclad frigates, and they had been lying in wait for days on the Coast of Naples waiting to intercept the Crusaders who dared to land in Southern Italy in an attempt to halt the Kaiser's advance into Rome.

Reitz simply stood in the downpour of rain as he patiently watched the enemy ships enter into his firing line. The moment the catholic Armada crossed a distance of thirteen kilometers, he gave the command to initiate the attack.

"Hard to starboard!"

With this said and a spin of the wheel, the German fleet rapidly transitioned so that their vessels were facing the enemy with their broadside guns. The next generation of vessels, which were currently being developed by the German Shipyards in Trieste, Malta, and the Baltic, would soon replace this primitive system of mounting guns on ships. However, for now, the broadside method was the best option the Kriegsmarine had available to it.

After swinging the ships so their sides could face the enemy, the order to open fire was given. In that moment, two hundred and twenty cannons fired in unison towards the direction of the Catholic Armada.

The poor souls onboard that Catholic ship could only gaze in horror as the high explosive shells barreled down towards them from the sky. However, their misery did not last long. Once the shells impacted, the explosive force ripped apart the entire vessel, claiming the lives of everyone on board.

Reitz gazed through his binocular and smiled after hearing the detonation. He stood silently as he witnessed the fiery blaze of the enemy vessels as it consumed the lives of all who manned them. After the first line of Catholic ships were blasted apart, the remainder split into a loose formation, hoping that the Germans would have a harder time hitting them.

The ships used by the Germans were hardly modern vessels; they were completely lacking in computers and targeting arrays. Each gun had to be loaded and aimed by a crew. This meant there was a much larger margin of error when the shells were fired towards the enemy.

However, was survival so easy? While plenty of shells missed their mark, the Germans had an overwhelming number of cannons to fire. They could reload each gun and fire again after a mere two seconds. With this overwhelming barrage of explosive fire, the Catholic ships were picked off one by one, regardless of their loose formation.

The shells who missed their targets sank into the Mediterranean and exploded within its depths. The sheer loss of marine life from these attacks was incalculable. However, the Germans did not care, and fired as many shells as they could at the enemy vessels, which desperately struggled to get past the German fleet and make their way to the southern Italian shores.

The guns onboard the Frigates continued to load and fire in a stream of barrages that lit the Mediterranean ablaze, or so it would appear from the shoreline, because it quickly engulfed hundreds of vessels in flames, and sent them to the depths of the sea.

Despite the furious onslaught, there was only so much that the ten German vessels could do. After all, the enemy ships numbered in the hundreds, and despite the overwhelming amount of rifled breechloading cannons that the Germans possessed. They simply could not sink every vessel. Thus, a sizeable percentage of the ships passed by the German fleet, sighing in relief as they foolishly believed the battle was over.

On board the vessel which belonged to King Andrzej Jagiellon, the Polish monarch immediately cried out blasphemy as he sighed in relief. He truly believed the worst was behind him, and he would soon be safe on the beach, far away from the German fleet.

"Oh, merciful Poseidon, thank you for sparing this wayward mariner!"

A nearby crusader immediately looked at the Polish King with a sense of disdain, forcing the man to defend himself.

"What? It was a joke!"

The crusader merely scoffed. He was about to chew out Andrzej when the sound of thunder crackled in the air. The two men practically soiled themselves when they realized the German fleet had just destroyed the vessel nearest to them. The Polish King could only curse out to the sky for its lack of mercy.

"Curse you merciful poseidon!"

While the Catholic fleet may have passed through the broadside guns on the right side of the German Vessels, they had unknowingly sailed into the range of the other half of the German Fleet's firepower. Where the German sailors ruthlessly opened fire on the Catholic forces who continued to press on towards the Italian shore.

King Andrzej Jagiellon could hardly believe his sight as shells landed left and right, with every barrage at least one Catholic ship was shredded apart by the explosive blast. While the men onboard the surviving vessels turned pale with fright. They simply did not have the means to stop the German attack.

One by one, the remaining Catholic vessels were blasted apart, until finally only a dozen ships remained. However, they had successfully gone beyond the range of the German guns, and thus they had finally made it to safety. Andrzej immediately fell to his knees as his ship hit the shore. The Catholics were so fearful of the German pursuit that they completely beached their vessels, not willing to take the time necessary to properly anchor them in the bay.

Out of the hundreds of ships that the crusaders had embarked towards Italy upon, roughly a dozen survived. Andrzej was not the only one whose stomach was unsettled. Plenty of men dived onto the beach, where they hurled up the contents of their stomach onto its sandy shores. They could hardly believe they had survived the German attack. If the German Navy had such a monumental advantage, just what would they be facing when they finally met the German Army in the field?

After all, the Germans were most well known for their land warfare capabilities. If they had advanced so far ahead of the rest of the world with their navy, then it was simply unimaginable the ability that the German Army had.

Upon thinking about this dread, Andrzej realized that there was simply no hope of victory, and because of that, he intended to take what little remained of his army, and go back to Poland where he planned to be a good and obedient King towards his German neighbors. He could not help but voice the thoughts in his head.

"I surrender... You hear me Berengar! Poland surrenders!"

The Polish Knights and Men at arms stiffened in their spots when they saw how defeated their King was. Hundreds of thousands of Polish Men had embarked on the Crusade to the Holy Land, under the orders of their King.

Why would they do such a thing? Because they were promised vengeance against Germany after the Byzantines were defeated. Now, maybe a thousand of those men stood upon this shore. As for the rest of his army, they were either buried in the desert, drowned in the Mediterranean, or scattered to the winds, with no hopes of returning home.

However, before King Andrzej Jagiellon had any chance of returning home, his throat was slit from behind by a dagger. The icy gaze of the Duke of Burgundy penetrated the souls of the Polish soldiers as he stood fearlessly surrounded by his knights while spitting upon the corpse of the man he had just killed.

"Fucking traitor! Any man here who even thinks of surrendering, after everything we have lost, will suffer the same fate as this fool. I don't care about your rank and title. Today we all stand together and march north to defeat the German Army, or die trying. We can not allow the Holy See to be sacked by these barbarians!"

The various forces of the other realms quickly surrounded the Polish Knights and Men At Arms. They had no chance of avenging their King, and ultimately they were compelled under threat of death to march against the German Army.

Chapter 776 Meeting with the Bengal EmperorPart I

Itami kneeled on a cushion within the interior of her largest warship. Her long snow white hair flowed behind her back and was styled elegantly. For the sake of this meeting, she had dressed in a blood-red silk saree. As a woman, she enjoyed dressing up for special occasions, especially diplomatic visits, where she often wore the fashion of the culture she was negotiating with.

On a normal day, the young empress would simply tie back her hair into a ponytail and dress in men's clothing. If she was being honest with herself, she simply preferred the practicality of the clothing that the opposite sex wore. It was because of this utilitarian taste that many of the men under her command considered her beauty to be lacking.

It was not that Itami wasn't beautiful when she put no effort into her looks; it was simply that men found her cross-dressing and her lack of cosmetics to be undesirable. After introducing modern makeup to the Japanese Empire, the women of Japan had reached a new level of attractiveness.

Thus, when compared to other pretty women in Japan who always wore makeup and kimonos, she was commonly seen as a second-rate beauty. However, on the rare occasion that Itami actually put effort into her appearance, she rapidly transformed into the most gorgeous woman in the room.

That beauty was once more on full display as she waited patiently for her ship to reach the shores of the Bengal Empire. After all, Itami had found that having a pretty face always led to her negotiations ending in her favor.

In her experience, Men were foolish creatures, who at the first sight of a pretty face, and a nice pair of tits would make any sacrifice just for a chance to sleep with the woman they belonged to. Luckily for Itami, she was blessed with both assets, making negotiations with foreign rulers an easy endeavor.

Though Itami would never go so far as to seduce a man in order to accomplish her goals, she knew that simply by looking pretty, and acting friendly, most men would instantly become puddy in her hands. After all, what guy didn't like being treated well by a foreign beauty?

Well, any man except for one. It was while she was thinking about how she would manipulate the Bengal Emperor into becoming her puppet that she thought about all the chances she tried to get Julian to notice her in her past life. She honestly never knew if the man was gay, dense, or simply a lolicon.

Scratch that, she knew Julian wasn't gay because she had seen his browsing history while he wasn't paying attention, and whatever pornography he was watching in his spare time always included a woman. When a man lives alone, he doesn't concern himself with using incognito mode or clearing his browser history. That was a lesson she had learned from Julian.

While Itami was thinking about the past, her ship pulled into the docks of the Bengal Empire's largest port city. In this world, Islam had never spread to India or Eastern Asia. As a result, Hinduism and Buddhism were the two most practiced religions on the Indian subcontinent.

When Itami stepped off her vessel and into the city, a man dressed in lavish silk trappings greeted her. He was young, roughly Itami's age, perhaps a year or two older, and was exceptionally handsome, at least by the local standards. He had relatively light skin, dark eyes, and jet black hair which flowed down to his shoulders like a river of ink.

This man was the Bengal Emperor who had recently ascended to the throne after his father died of a heart attack. He took one look at the Japanese Empress and immediately fell head over heels in love with her. He quickly approached the woman and opened his arms in a shameless attempt to get a hug.

"Empress Itami, it is my greatest pleasure to welcome you to my Empire. I see the rumors about your beauty were true, I must say I have never seen such a fine woman in my life before now..."

Itami's interpreter translated the man's words, causing the young empress to force a smile on her cherry lips as she accepted the compliment, but refused the man's hug, instead speaking to him as if he were her peer.

"Emperor Asha Sarkar, I must thank you in advance for your hospitality. As promised, I have brought the goods. Shall we conduct business over lunch? After all, I am dying to taste some of the local cuisine."

The man did not let the fact that Itami kept him at a distance ruin his mood. The fact that she was willing to dine with him so soon after meeting for the first time was a good sign in his eyes. In reality, Itami was simply sick of sea rations and instead wanted to eat something fresh. It helped that she enjoyed Indian food in her past life. Though how many of those distinctive dishes existed in this period, she did not know.

The two of them walked forward with their guards, while Itami's marines secured the items on board the ship. She would not hand over the goods for inspection until they could come to an agreement on the terms of their sale. If Itami was being honest with herself, she was less concerned about making a

profit, and more interested in turning the Bengal Army into her proxy against the German Empire in the west.

Asha led Itami into the Palace, where his servants were quick to prepare the meal. Instead of a local delicacy like Itami was expecting, she instead saw a bowl filled with canned soup, imported from the German Empire. Her disappointment was unfathomable as she expressed her discontent with the dish.

"This is what you choose to serve to your guests?"

Asha had already eaten a spoonful of the canned soup with a satisfied smile on his face. When Itami called him out on his actions, he was stunned. In the lands outside the reich, they considered canned food a delicacy that only the nobility could obtain. In fact, even in India, the prestige of German goods had become a status symbol. He could not believe his guest was unhappy with such an expensive meal.

Naturally, Itami was from the 21st century, or at least a reincarnation of such an individual, and because of this, the idea of eating canned food for a diplomatic visit was not only laughable but outright offensive. In her eyes, canned food was something you ate when you were either too lazy to prepare a proper meal, had no skills in cooking whatsoever, or were so poor it was the only thing you could afford. It was definitely not something the wealthy elite dined upon.

Asha gazed upon Itami's stupefied expression, and quickly asked if it was not to her liking, he realized the woman may not have contact with Germany, since her empire was so far away, and believed that the concept of canned food was simply alien to her.

"This soup is made in a foreign land to the far west. It is superb quality, and easy to make. Here in the Bengal Empire we can only get our hands on a limited supply of the stuff, so naturally it has become a popular item among the nobility. Is it not to your liking?"

It took Itami a moment to process the idea that this foreign reincarnator had so much influence on this world that foreign countries treated his canned food, which he undoubtedly used to feed the poor in his country, and as rations for his army, as a supreme delicacy. She could not help but press her forehead into her palm, and sigh before cursing Berengar's name in her native tongue.

Naturally, the Bengal Emperor couldn't understand her, and because of this, Itami used the translator to change her words from a curse to a question.

"I don't mean to offend, but do you mind serving me some fresh food? This just seems so unappealing to me for some reason..."

The Bengal Emperor realized he must have somehow offended the foreign beauty and was quick to yell at his servants to prepare the woman a local delicacy. Upon smelling some proper food being cooked up, Itami once more smiled before immediately questioning the man about what he knew regarding the German Empire and its Kaiser.

"What do you know of this Berengar von Kufstein? I have heard rumors about him, but what I have learned is limited. Since you are clearly engaging in trade with the man, surely you can enlighten me on his personality?"

Naturally, after Berengar had announced to the world that the exiled Anangpur Empire and his sister were under his protection, the various powers of the Indian Subcontinent began to search for information regarding the Kaiser and his capabilities.

With the opening of the Kaiser's Pass, trade had flourished among Germany and India, and because of this, the various Indian states learned quite a bit about life in the Reich. Needless to say, they were shocked when they heard the rumors regarding the fatherland. Thus, Asha was quick to speak about what he had learned. The Bengal Emperor's next words would unwittingly have a major impact on this world's future. One caused simply because of his desire to sleep with Itami.

Chapter 777 Meeting with the Bengal EmperorPart II

The Bengal Emperor cleared his throat before answering Itami's question. While he spoke, he deliberately planned to leave out the good things he had heard about Berengar. Why would he do this? Because he could tell that Itami was very interested in the Kaiser, so much so that should she hear the better aspects of his character, she might become infatuated with him.

After all, Asha had heard the rumors that Itami was after a man capable of defeating her in battle, and if anyone in the world could achieve that, it was surely Berengar. The last thing he needed in his attempts to woo the woman was her falling for another man. Thus, with a grim expression on his face, he prefaced his long-winded rant about the Kaiser with a disclaimer, just in case anything he said turned out to be false later.

"While it is true that I have begun to open trade with the Reich, especially after they blacklisted the Anangpur Empire as a major trading partner. It simply hasn't been long since the Germans opened the Kaiser's Pass, and so what I know is mostly hearsay."

Before the man could continue, Itami was quick to question him about what he meant by this statement.

"Wait a second, what is this Kaiser's pass?"

Asha looked at Itami with a bit of a shock in his eyes. The opening of the Kaiser's pass was an enormous deal to India, and he expected the fabled War-Goddess of Japan to already know about it. He quickly explained in great detail what the canal was before continuing his attempts to warp Itami's perspective about Berengar.

"The Kaiser's pass is the name for a giant canal recently built in the land known as Egypt. It allows for trade between the East and West via the sea. Because of this, German shipping has recently made its way to the Indian Subcontinent, and vice versa. However, it was only finished recently, and because of that, my knowledge of this Empire in the west is limited."

Itami was stunned when she heard this. Just how did Berengar manage to build the Suez Canal in 1426 AD? There was no mistaking it. If Germany was capable of doing such a thing, then they likely had surpassed her country's level of technology by several decades. This naturally only made her more interested in the man responsible for the Construction of the Kaiser's pass. Thus, she quickly inquired about him.

"I understand. So what were you saying about the Kaiser before I interrupted you?"

Asha took a sip from his tea before regaining his previous train of thought. After doing so, he was quick to inform the Japanese beauty about everything negative he had heard about Berengar.

"What I can tell you about the Kaiser is that the neighbors of the German Empire consider the man to be a bloodthirsty tyrant, a warmonger, and a heretic who has risen to his position through a series of bloody campaigns and political assassinations that have caused endless suffering and death. They are quick to speak of the man's disregard for human life, and his willingness to butcher entire cities if it means achieving victory in warfare.

Apparently, he has mastered the use of terror as a weapon, using it to force those who rebel against his reign into submission. I have heard that the Kaiser treats his allies as slaves, and has even gone so far as to place one of his sons on the throne of an allied kingdom, effectively turning it into his puppet. There are other rumors about the Kaiser that I have heard, but can't verify.

Supposedly, he has legalized polygamy in his country and has taken four heavenly beauties as his wives who tend to his every need. Rumor has it he has over a dozen children with them. He has also allegedly forced his own younger sister to be his concubine and has compelled the girl to carry his child. She is apparently every bit as beautiful as his wives."

Itami could not help but drop her jaw when she heard all of this. Her immediate view of Berengar had gone from a potential threat to a global menace. His blatant disregard for human life was definitely not in line with 21st century moral values. Was he from a more distant future than herself where human rights meant nothing?

Or perhaps he was from an earlier point in history with a similar set of values, like the Second World War? That would explain his lack of care towards collateral damage in the pursuit of victory. Whoever this man was, he clearly was a bloodthirsty psychopath who would stop at nothing to achieve his goals.

However, what bothered Itami the most about this shadowy rival of her was the part about him having four beautiful wives and a concubine. How could this bastard have five gorgeous women by his side, when she herself couldn't even find one capable man to marry? Five women? Seriously? It was just too cruel!

There was also the part about Berengar forcing his sister to be his concubine. That was simply disgusting. Though incest may be a common trope in things like Anime, and Light Novels, the idea that this man would actually go through with it in this world, while most likely fully being aware of the genetic problems inbreeding causes, was truly despicable. She had never had as much contempt for a man as she did right now.

The only way that Itami could even rationalize how such a bastard could get away with such madness was the prospect that he must be extremely handsome. After all, in her past life, she had witnessed plenty of women reject their dignity for the sake of being with a handsome and successful man.

Asha could tell that this news about Berengar troubled Itami, and that his personality disgusted her. It was a good thing he had not mentioned how the German people viewed their Kaiser. Because from what limited contact his people had with the Germans, all evidence pointed to them practically worshipping the man. Not only as the father of their nation, but as the man responsible for their way of life. He was practically a living god by the standards of the German people.

The Bengal Emperor decided now would be a good time to make his move, and he quickly reached his hand out to comfort the beautiful Japanese Empress, who was sitting across from him.

"Do not fret. The Germans are on the other side of the world. It is not like they will come to Asia to look for trouble."

Itami had barely noticed that the man had grabbed onto her hand, or even heard what he said. She was deeply distressed about everything she had heard regarding Berengar's character. If what Asha said was true, then she knew with certainty the Reich would eventually send their forces into the eastern part of the world for one reason or another, and when the Kaiser found out there was another reincarnator, he would stop at nothing until that threat was entirely neutralized.

Because of this, Itami was more determined than ever to make trouble for Berengar in India. If she could buy enough time, she might be able to catch up to him in terms of military technology. Then she could defeat him. Or so she believed.

After coming back to reality, Itami saw that the man sitting across from her was shamelessly holding her hand with a suave grin on his face. She immediately reacted in disgust and withdrew her dainty hand from the man's grip before condemning him for his actions.

"I don't remember giving you permission to touch me. We are not so close that you can do such a thing. Because you have given me such valuable information free of charge, I will forget this little mishap of yours ever happened. But try to touch me again, and I will have your hands removed!"

Asha's brow twitched when he heard this. What was wrong with this woman? She was in the middle of his Palace and she dared to threaten him? He had heard rumors that Itami had a seriously cold personality towards the opposite sex, but he had never realized that the woman was this rude. Despite her harsh reaction, he could only lower his head and apologize. To win this woman's heart, he would need to play the long game. After all, the prize for his patience would definitely be worth the effort.

"I apologize if I offended you your highness, I only sought to comfort you since you appeared so distressed. I swear on all the gods of my ancestors that I will not touch you without your permission ever again..."

Itami merely glared at the man. She knew his type; she had met plenty of men like him in both her lives. He only cared about one thing, getting into her pants, and like hell, she would ever allow that to happen. It was a good thing that at this moment; the servants arrived with the food they had prepared for their esteemed guest.

Itami said a quick prayer to the gods of her homeland before taking a bite. As for what came next, she would have to negotiate with this perverted emperor about the sale of weapons and munitions to his army, while still avoiding his attempts to sleep with her.

Chapter 778 The March to Rome

Berengar stood at the border of the Kingdom of Lombardy and the Kingdom of Naples. He stared through his monocular across the defenses that Lombardy had established and gazed upon the Army of Naples, who sat frigidly in their fortifications, too afraid of the German Army that had amassed beyond their borders to bother showing their faces.

While the Kingdom of Naples stood alone in its war against the German Army after losing their reinforcements in the Mediterranean, a union of four armies had formed on the opposite side of the border with a single purpose in mind. To bring an end to the tyranny of the Papacy.

Two divisions of Byzantine soldiers under the command of Palladius' protégé stood by Berengar's side. Alongside the Byzantines was the army of Al-Andalus, who Adelbrand had dispatched a division from the Iberian Peninsula to the Lombardic border to do its part in the war against the Papacy. Finally, the Kingdom of Lombardy had a division of its own army standing alongside German troops as they prepared to end this conflict once and for all.

This war had progressed in Berengar's favor rapidly. This was to be expected, considering the overwhelming superiority of the German Army. While the Kaiser was marching to the Lombardic border, he had heard reports over the telegraph of the victory his forces had gained in the East. In the desert wastelands of Egypt, the Reichsgarde had utterly annihilated the English Army and the Order of the Red Dragon.

However, that wasn't the only significant victory for the Germans had achieved on the eastern front. On the border of the Kingdom of Hungary, the Hungarian King had foolishly marched his forces upon the German Borders, in under an hour half of his army was wiped out by the German border guard, and forced to retreat back into their Realm, awaiting reinforcements from the Holy Land.

In the lowlands, the local population greeted the soldiers of the Reich with open arms, while the Germans made an example out of the rebellious nobility. After their first loss in the campaign came in the form of an executed messenger, the General in charge of the theater decided to afford no quarter to the Burgundian nobility, and had ordered the execution of all major noble houses.

However, the good news did not end there. The Fifth Fleet, who was normally stationed in Malta, had intercepted the Crusader armada and sent a hundred thousand men to the depths of the Mediterranean. With this, the reinforcements that were supposed to protect Rome were annihilated before Germany and its allies could even march on the city.

With the Catholic ships sunk to the bottom of the Mediterranean, those Crusaders who were still stuck in the Holy Land had no means to return home. Because of that, it forced the newly established Kingdom of Jerusalem to provide for hundreds of thousands of refugees. Something they simply could not do.

By the end of the conflict, the crusaders stuck in the Holy land would either disband and become a problem for the neighboring kingdoms in the form of brigands, or they would simply starve to death. Perhaps a select few of their most elite warriors might be selected to stay and operate as members of Jerusalem's army.

The Catholic World had emptied their fields to provide the number of soldiers to embark on its foolish crusades. Now a large percentage of them lie dead, with the rest either stranded, or acting as defenders to what little land remained for Germany to conquer. Just as quickly as the war had started, so too was it coming to an end.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the Catholic World lost its peasant class in this conflict would seriously affect their ability to produce food for their population. The aftermath of this war would find the Catholic Kings

wholly dependent on trade with Germany to survive. Their economies would be in shambles, and it would take them decades, if not centuries, to recover their ability to stand on their own.

Berengar had been preparing for this war for years, and he almost felt ashamed that it was going to be over so soon. However, there was nothing he could do to change that. Unless he decided to take an entirely defensive position and wait for the enemy to march on his borders. However, such an action would be foolish, and after everything the enemy had witnessed in the eastern front, he doubted they would continue their attempts to invade the fatherland.

There was only so much the Crusaders could do while armed with matchlock rifles and muzzle loading cannons. Germany had the power of long range artillery and machine guns in its hands. With these weapons, a few thousand men could defend a section of the border against an army ten times its size.

Berengar's plan now was to take Rome, after which he would march his armies across southern Italy and unite it with its northern half. After seizing all of Italy and bestowing it upon his puppet, Bruno, the Kaiser, would march his armies into Poland, and Hungary, where he would execute their monarchs and put a puppet on their thrones.

Luckily for Berengar, the Duke of Burgundy had already removed the Polish King for him. All he needed to do was march into a Warsaw, and take Natalia's brother as a ward, where he would teach the boy to be the perfect puppet for the von Kufstein Dynasty.

As for Hungary, Berengar had already formulated a plan long ago. Though Linde nearly ruined his schemes, he was certain that he could execute the Hungarian King and place Noemi's elder brother on the throne. The young man had proven himself to be a friend of the Reich, and would be easy to convince to act as a puppet for the Kaiser.

the Reich would annex the German-speaking lands of the Duchy of Burgundy, such as the lowlands, while the rest of the realm would remain independent and become a valuable tool in the Balkanization of France.

Through gunboat diplomacy, Berengar intended to compel a successor of his choice to replace the King of England. Though he did not want to invade the British Isles himself, the threat of his naval guns obliterating London would be more than enough to force the English to bend to his will.

Thus, after reflecting on all of this, Berengar sighed as he stood next to the King of Lombardy. Both men were prepared to march into Rome and end this conflict. After a few moments of silence, Berengar spoke the thoughts on his mind as he put away his monocular.

"Bruno, my old friend, it is time for us to end this conflict with the Catholic Church once and for all."

The King of Lombardy nodded his head in agreement with Berengar's words. The Kingdom of Lombardy had been a tributary state to the Germans since Berengar first gained independence for Austria. As Germany rose to greater heights, so too did its client states.

If the King of Lombardy was being honest, The Kaiser's plans for a Pax Germania would see Europe as a whole advance far beyond the rest of the world, and he was looking forward to it. Thus, it was not surprising when he voiced his agreement with Berengar's plans.

"Agreed, for too long I have had to live in fear of the Catholic forces invading beyond my southern border, today we not only put an end to the conflict between your Empire and the Catholic Church, but we also unite Italy under a single banner. Forever destroying the hold the Papacy has over Europe!"

Berengar smiled as he heard this before patting the man on the shoulder. After doing that, he gave his orders to all the soldiers beneath his command.

"Open fire on the enemy's border defenses! I want these bastards buried alive in their stone keeps!"

The march to Rome had begun. Thus, the German artillery quickly loaded their weapons and fired on the stone forts that the southern Italians had constructed. Explosions rocked the forts, and their foundations began to crumble. Still, the forts were large and it would take more than a few shells to bring them down.

The Italian defenders panicked as the German Artillery shook the structures they hid within. They did not even know how far away the German army and their allies were. It did not matter, because there was no hope for their survival. The best they could do was run out of their keeps and wave the white flag, hoping their enemies would be merciful.

Those stubborn individuals who would not kneel before the heretics of the north had stayed in their keeps, and after a few, barrages were buried by the walls when they came crumbling down. The overwhelming power of German artillery crushed the strong stone fortresses that the Kingdom of Naples had spent years building along their border in a matter of minutes.

With the border defenses destroyed, the Artillery quickly ejected their spent shells and hitched their field guns to the horses who dragged them forward into the borders of the Kingdom of Naples. Rome was not far from the border, and soon the Union of Four Armies would be at the heart of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 779 Reconnaissance in the IndianSubcontinent

The meal between Itami and Asha continued. However, there was a brief intermittence where Itami took a quick restroom break. After taking care of business, she took the opportunity to meet with one of her guards and gave him orders to investigate the claims that the Bengal Emperor had made about Berengar von Kufstein. Though she was frightened by the news she had heard, she would not wholly believe it until her own intelligence network could confirm the information she had received.

While the Bengal Emperor had spoken ill of Berengar, and greatly exaggerated the man's more sinister characteristics, most of what he spoke had some truth to it. Especially from the perspective of Germany's neighbors. Of course, Itami did not know that by dispatching her men to gain information from the locals about their trade with the strange Empire to the West that she would catch the eye of Linde's agents who were embedded in the region.

In the marketplace of the Port City. A German Merchant operating a stall was selling his wares to the locals. He immediately noticed the strange appearance of the Japanese soldiers who wore semi-modern style uniforms and carried what appeared to be bolt action rifles. These men were going about asking the locals about information regarding the German Empire. Which also caught his attention.

Whoever these foreigners were, they were interested in the Reich for One reason or another. Because of this, the Merchant felt it was his duty to warn the fatherland, and quickly typed away on the telegraph key which sat beneath his table.

Within the stall was a hidden telegraph. All he needed to do was reach under the tablecloth and type on the key to send a message to a nearby Dominion Class merchant ship anchored in the Bay of Bengal, which was, in reality, a German Reconnaissance ship.

From there, the far more powerful telegraph stationed on board the vessel would relay the message back to the fatherland. It took only a few moments for words from agents in the field to reach the headquarters of Imperial Intelligence located in Kufstein.

After the agent's report of strange men from the far east, wielding modern weapons and disembarking from steam-powered vessels was relayed back to headquarters. It quickly ended up in the hands of the Deputy Director, who was currently smoking a cigarette in her office.

When her aide rushed into the room and handed her the information, she stared at it blankly, dropping the cigarette from her fingers as she did so. This information was like a bombshell, and she did not instantly believe it. Once Hemma regained her composure, she stared sternly at the aide before questioning the legitimacy of this message.

"Is this some sort of joke? Is one of our agents playing a prank on me? What the hell is this nonsense?"

The aide could tell the woman was frustrated and quickly shook her head as she asserted that what had been relayed was reality.

"It's a priority message from Rudolf. He is one of our agents in the Bengal Empire, conducting reconnaissance as we speak. I went through all the procedures to confirm the information, and the other agents in the region corroborate Rudolf's message. There is a powerful nation from the Far East who is trading with the Bengal Empire and looking for information regarding the Reich."

Upon hearing this, Hemma picked up her cigarette from the table it had fallen upon and took a long drag. There was utter silence for a few moments before she finished the entire stick in one go. After putting the cigarette out in her ashtray, the deputy director stood up from her seat and said one sentence before walking out the door.

"Clear my schedule for the day!"

It would take an idiot to fail to realize where Hemma was going. There was only one person to report this information to, especially since Berengar was currently in the field. Because of that, the aide swallowed the words she was about to speak and quickly did as she was instructed.

Hemma walked over to the Palace, where Linde was currently looking after her many children. The woman did not work as often in intelligence as she used to, and spent most of her time with her family. She was playing with her youngest son Josef, who was still an infant, when Hemma walked through the door unannounced. By the look on the young woman's face, Linde could tell something serious had happened, and she quickly picked up her youngest son and spoke to him before placing him in the crib.

"Sorry Josef, but mommy has work to do. I will be back in a bit to feed you. Just be a good boy and wait patiently for my return."

The child was too young to speak, and merely smiled as it made an unintelligible sound. Which Linde then kissed him on the forehead before laying him down in the crib. The moment she turned around and faced Hemma, her warm appearance faded, and was instead replaced with an icy demeanor. Hemma wanted to speak up, but the redheaded beauty raised her finger to silence her before walking out the door.

Linde did not want her youngest child influenced by matters of state when he was so young and quickly walked to Berengar's office, where she sat down in his seat. She did not say a word until Hemma had closed the door behind them. When Linde finally spoke, she was in a foul mood.

"This better be important!"

Hemma could tell Linde was furious, and merely bowed her head before handing over the message she had received from her agents in the Bengal Empire.

"I'm sorry for the intrusion, ma'am, but this is urgent."

Linde looked over the message and was immediately stunned in silence. She knew better than anybody what this message meant. After all, she was familiar with Berengar's background, and how he came up with all the designs he had implemented across the Reich.

For a steam-powered vessel to appear on the other side of the world, as well as soldiers armed with weapons similar to the Reich's capabilities, meant only one thing. There was another reincarnator in this world. This would explain why they were looking for information on the Reich.

The power behind the throne of this foreign nation must have heard rumors about Berengar and the power of his empire. It took the woman a few moments to react to this news, but in the end, she swiftly came up with a plan of action to respond to this event.

"This is troublesome... As of this moment, the Indian subcontinent has become an area of priority. I want you to immediately dispatch more agents to the region, and for our men and women already there to gather information about the strange power who built this ship, while conducting counter-intelligence operations towards this foreign power's agents.

Under no circumstances can these foreigners learn about the current capabilities of the Reich! While you're at it, I want you to find out why they are in the Bengal Empire. If they seek to expand their influence into the region, it will become an enormous problem for us!"

Hemma silently nodded her head. She had no further suggestions, so she knew it was better to remain silent. Linde could only sigh heavily in defeat. She had desired to use the Pax Germania that Berengar established after this war with the Catholic World, to force the man to take more time off so that he could spend it with his family.

However, at this moment, Linde realized that the Reich was just about to enter a massive arms race with whoever the foreign power behind this steam-powered vessel was. For that, Berengar would need to spend as much time as possible advancing the capabilities of the Reich and its global Empire. After a few moments of pouting, she realized Hemma was still there, waiting to be dismissed, and thus she glared at the woman before yelling at her.

"What are you waiting for? Dismissed!"

Hemma felt shivers down her spine before she scampered off back to the headquarters of Imperial Intelligence. Luckily, they had just entered a new era of trade with the Indian Subcontinent and because of that, it would not be suspicious at all if the flow of Germans into the region increased suddenly. Thus, Germany could embed many, many more agents into the area with no one batting an eye.

As for Linde, she would wait until after this war with the Catholic world was over before informing Berengar of what she had just learned. She needed him to be fully committed to annihilating the Papacy and installing puppets on the thrones of the European Kingdoms. If he knew about this foreign reincarnator who threatened his power, he might become paranoid and do something reckless to end the war even quicker.

All of this had occurred while Itami was eating lunch with the Bengal Emperor, without her even being aware of it happening. Had she known her brief visit to the Bengal Empire would expose her identity and location to Berengar, she would never have made the journey.

Chapter 780 Meeting With the Bengal EmperorPart III

Itami sat across from the Bengal Emperor. The two monarchs were in the middle of a heated negotiation regarding the trade of arms. The Japanese Empress's goal was to turn the Bengal Empire into her puppet. After all, if she could convince them to buy her weapons, then they would be entirely reliant on Japan for resupply of both arms and munitions.

Asha was unaware of Itami's intentions, and was more concerned with finding a way to make the woman his own. He listened to her tale, and in truth planned to buy her weapons from the moment her first laid eyes on her. After all, he had plenty of wealth lying around, and if it meant earning the eastern beauty's favor, then he wouldn't mind tossing her a few thousand pounds of gold and silver.

Itami spoke with a confident smirk on her pretty face as she outlined her proposal to the man in great detail. She used her attractive appearance to ensnare the man's attention as she voiced every word in an overly friendly tone.

"I promise you, Asha, that with my weapons, your armies will be unstoppable in the field of battle. Your armies can march across the territory of your rivals with impunity, nobody in the Indian subcontinent will be able to halt your advance. It might take some time, but within a few years, you will be the first man to rule over a united India.

I'm talking about firearms that are not only capable of multiple shots before reloading, but have a superior range over the primitive matchlocks you are currently using. Accompanying these infantry weapons will be artillery that is not only quicker to reload than your muzzleloading cannons, but also has improved range and superior destructive ability.

If you promise to buy enough of these cannons, I will even throw in a few machine guns at a reduced price. I warn you, these weapons are extremely expensive, but they will allow a small crew of men to have the same amount of firepower as a battalion. You will cut through your enemies' ranks before they even have the ability to engage you! It doesn't matter if it is man, or elephant, these guns will be enough to defeat all of your foes.

Naturally, when Itami used the words machine guns, she was referring to hand cranked Gatling guns, like those of Germany had employed for several years now. She spoke a big game, Asha had to admit

that, but he was internally skeptical of the woman's claims. Or her reasoning for even bothering to trade such mighty weapons to him in the first place. Thus, the Bengal Emperor smiled when he heard these words and quickly interrogated Itami about her intentions.

"Tell me, Empress Itami, why are you willing to supply me with such weapons? We have no prior relationship, and we do not have the ability to aid you in battle. After all, we are so far away from where your Empire lies. So what possible reason do you have to support us?"

Itami obviously couldn't admit the fact that she wanted to use the Bengalis as Proxies against the Germans in order to buy herself some much needed time to catch up to them. Because of this, she simply smiled and took a sip from her wine before responding to the man's question with a lie.

"If I am being honest with you, I need the gold, and selling arms to a foreign power is the quickest way to achieve this. Your Empire is so far away from mine that even if I sold you these weapons, you wouldn't pose a threat to my ambitions. Besides, having a united India that is friendly to the Empire of the Rising Sun would naturally benefit me in many ways."

Asha nodded his head and took a sip from his drink. When he heard this, he felt as if he understood the woman's personality a bit more. However, if he was going to invest money into this woman's weapons, he would need to see how effective they were in person. Itami may be among the most beautiful women he had ever seen, but every rose has its thorns, and she could easily be swindling him. Thus, he agreed to her terms, but with a condition.

"Very well, I accept your offer, under the condition that I can personally witness a display of these weapons' effectiveness. I wouldn't want to pay such a staggering sum only to find out you have been exaggerating how great your wares are."

Itami nodded her head in agreement before placing her chalice down on the table. She had finished her meal and was prepared to conclude her transaction. After all, the sooner she sold these weapons to the Bengal Empire and secured them as a proxy, the sooner she could return home and begin her plans to conquer Korea.

"Very well, follow me to the docks, and I will show you just how effective these weapons are..."

With that said, the two monarchs and their translator walked down to the docks where the Japanese soldiers were standing watch. Itami quickly gave an order to her marines before sitting back and waiting for them to set up their weapons.

"Quickly, prepare the goods so that they fire at the ocean. I want to show the buyer just how effective our weapons are!"

While the Japanese soldiers opened up the crates and pulled out the guns so that they could do as instructed, a crowd gathered around them with a sense of curiosity for what was about to transpire. In this crowd was the German agent known as Rudolf, who watched with shock as he witnessed the weapons being revealed. He immediately noticed the Gatling gun as a design employed by the German Army and had the sudden urge to report such news to the fatherland.

However, in the next moment, the Marines opened fire with the lever action rifles, firing all of their shots straight into the sea. After doing so, they pulled out their revolvers and used them as well. Having

fired the revolvers, they loaded the Gatling gun, whose effectiveness stunned everyone in the crowd, except for Rudolf.

Once the Gatling gun was depleted, the marines moved onto the Armstrong gun, where they loaded an explosive shell into its breech, and fired it into the sea. The explosion erupted on the water's surface, which immediately caught the interest of the Bengal Emperor. The truth was, Asha was stunned by the destructive nature of the weapons that Itami was willing to sell him. He could downsize his army to a few thousand men and still conquer his nearest neighbors.

However, if he began conscription, he could employ these weapons among tens of thousands of soldiers, no hundreds of thousands, and easily conquer the entire Indian Subcontinent. A flash of ambition filled the man's dark eyes as he witnessed the weapons being unloaded by the Japanese Marines. He could not help but ask the question on his mind.

"You will supply my army with these weapons, and the munitions to use them?"

Itami had a devilish smirk on her pretty face as she nodded her head in agreement.

"As much as your army needs, so long as you are willing to pay the agreed price, these weapons can be yours."

Upon hearing this, Asha's lips curved into a wicked smile as he envisioned the prospect of a unified India under his control. He could see the prosperity that such an Empire would have and immediately nodded his head thrice before agreeing to Itami's terms.

"Very well, I agree with whatever price you demand of me. Simply ask and I will pay for it with gold! Once my army is fully equipped with these weapons, I will march them into the lands of my Southern Neighbor and begin my conquest. After I have united the entire subcontinent, I will repay your support by making you a war goddess to be worshipped by my people until the end of time."

Itami forced a smile on her face as she heard this. She had no ambitions to be worshipped as a genuine deity. The nickname her soldiers gave her was not one of genuine religion, but admiration for her accomplishments. Still, she accepted the man's offer and continued to speak with the Bengal Emperor about the proper price for the arms that she would sell him.

Meanwhile, Rudolf had returned to his stall. He had heard every word spoken by Itami and Asha and did not hesitate to dispatch another telegram to the fatherland, informing them of the weapons sale between the Japanese the Bengal Empires, as well as the plans for Conquest that the Bengal Emperor had expressed.

Ultimately, this news would force Berengar to act on his ambitions in India far sooner than he had initially planned. Dragging him into a war shortly after defeating the Catholic Church. Where the armies of Germany would invade the Anangpur Empire to unseat the Regent and place Dharya on its throne. Berengar simply could not allow the Bengal Empire to unite the Indian Subcontinent.

This was good news for Itami, who would use the distraction of India to launch her invasion into the Korean Peninsula, as well as her other targets. Securing her the natural resources she desperately needed to produce superior ships that would be capable of contending with the Reich on the seas.