

Steel 81

Chapter 81: Gaining the Count's Support

Adela was currently in her room playing with a letter in her hands, debating whether or not she should read its contents. On this letter was the seal of house von Habsburg-Innsbruck and she knew of only one member of that family who would ever write to her. Obviously, this letter contained the words of Linde, though what it contained the young girl did not have the heart to find out. She was fearful it would contain the truth about the parentage of Linde's child as a way to mock her now that she was away from Berengar's company.

After some time, Adela decided to open the letter and, after doing so, read through its contents with an anxious outlook. It was only after she had re-read the letter three times did she fully relax; she realized that she had been completely overthinking things and that she should have opened it sooner.

The letter contained Linde's plea to unite their families against the Church's ploys to interfere with Berengar's trade. It did not contain a single spiteful comment by Linde and actually encouraged them to get along. However, there was a certain sentence that made Adela mildly upset. Her sight caught onto it and re-read it constantly for nearly ten minutes, and the passage was as follows.

"For the man we both love, I see no reason that we can not unite and do our best to aid him in his hour of need."

Though Linde had always hinted about her feelings towards Berengar, and Adela indeed suspected there was a relationship between the two, at this point, Linde was outright admitting it in this letter. Adela could not help but sigh and pout as she rested her cheek in the palm of her hand while expressing her thoughts aloud.

"Why did I have to fall in love with a womanizer like you?"

There was nobody in the room to hear her, and as such, she merely sat in silence thinking about all the great memories she had made with Berengar over the past few months. She greatly desired to see him again, but unfortunately, her birthday was not for another month. However, despite knowing about Berengar's actions, she was not angry and instead decided to

aid Linde in helping Berengar; as such, she quickly rushed to her father, who was in the middle of his study.

Count Otto was going over the ledger containing the steel reserves he had amassed from trade with Berengar; at this rate, he would soon be able to supply his armies with the best equipment. Like Sieghard had envisioned, his armies would be equipped mostly with a brigandine and steel plate mixture. As such, he was currently signing orders to produce such equipment when he heard a knock on his door. He quickly announced that the door was unlocked.

"It is open."

After hearing such words, Adela opened the door and approached her father with a serious expression. Adela was the youngest of Otto's daughters and the one he doted on the most. If not for the dire need of iron, he never would have engaged his favorite daughter to her once sickly cousin; instead, he would find her a prince. However, the engagement turned out for the best as Berengar proved to be quite the capable young man and had turned a massive amount of iron into steel, which was practically a miracle in this medieval world. The couple also seemed to be greatly fond of one another, so it worked out for the best.

After Adela arrived in the room, she quickly spouted out her thoughts to her father

"Berengar is in trouble!"

This struck a nerve with Otto as he was unaware of such things; in fact, now that Berengar ruled over both Kufstein and Kitzbühel in his father's stead, the young man should be doing better than ever, as such he questioned what exactly his precious daughter meant when she said that.

"What do you mean?"

Adela was unhesitant as she quickly explained the situation to her father.

"The Pope has issued a decree openly endorsing the theft of his trade; Berengar does not have a reputation fearsome enough to dissuade his neighbors from engaging in such acts, let alone the territories between our

land and his. If we do not issue a public statement backing him, then I'm afraid we will no longer be able to get the steel we require for the army."

Count Otto was outraged when he heard this news; he immediately questioned in his own mind as to why he was not informed earlier. After thinking things through he let loose his inner thoughts about the papacy and their constant interference into the secular realm's affairs.

"Why is it that the Pope always has to stick his nose into the business of the nobility. This is outrageous. I will immediately publically denounce such a statement and stand by Berengar's side. I will also encourage my allies to do the same and make it clear what will happen if anyone dares to steal my shipments!"

Adela was elated by the news and ran up to her father and hugged him with joy.

"Thanks, daddy!"

after saying that, she left the man behind in his study alone with his own thoughts. After Adela had disappeared beyond his door, the count pulled out a chalice and a flagon of wine and began to drink from it before sighing out loud.

"Damnit Berengar, I know the Church is full of shit, but you just had to execute two of their fucking inquisitors. I won't be able to protect you from everything, but this is the least I can do to honor our alliance."

As such, he quickly pulled out a piece of parchment and his quill. Where he began to draft a public decree of condemnation against the Church and their public endorsement of theft, labeling it a violation of the ten commandments and unbecoming of the Vatican and the Pope who was God's representative on Earth. After doing so, he had it spread far and wide so that anyone with half a brain could realize that provoking Berengar and his alliances with two Counts was a terrible idea. Ultimately this decision would help lead to the German Schism with the Catholic Church, which was on the horizon.