

Tyranny of Steel

Chapter 10

Chapter 10: A Verbal Thrashing

As the light of dawn shone upon Berengar's regal face, he awoke peacefully. Though his body was sore all over from his previous day's activities, he still managed to drag himself out of bed. If he kept pushing himself like this, his body might give out on him before he can cure himself of his natural infirmity. Thus he decided to take a day off from excessive exercise. Instead, he spent the early morning converting the jar of lard he received from Gunther into the pomade he had so dearly desired.

Using a homemade recipe, which he utilized extensively in his previous life, Berengar had finally succeeded in his endeavor. His next course of action was taking his morning bath which was a bit earlier than usual. Afterward, he placed his fingers into the wax-like substance and slicked his hair back with it. After carefully styling his hair, he gazed at himself in the bathroom mirror. Aside from his thin and frail body, he looked very majestic with the new hairstyle.

His previous attempt using grease residue from the bath to style his hair ended disastrously; it smelled bad, it kept falling out of place, and it did not meet Berengar's excessive conditions in the slightest. However, after successfully inventing pomade, his already exquisite appearance improved further. He was amazed at how much better-looking his current body was than in his previous life. The Golden-Blonde hair, which now shimmered in the light of dawn, the deep sapphire eyes, which appeared as if they had been chiseled out of gemstone, and the milky white skin which every girl dreamed of having combined perfectly into a princely appearance suiting his noble heritage.

The only advantage his previous appearance had over his current one was that it had a strong and fit body. However, these things could naturally be improved over time, and he was in no hurry to impress the women of this era. He had many things to accomplish before even thinking of getting married, besides the only members of the opposite sex he was remotely close to were his little sister and his mother, at the very least, he would have to be introduced to a proper woman before he could even attempt to woo her.

After styling his appearance and gazing at himself in the mirror, Berengar had taken the time to get dressed in an opulent black doublet, with gilded lining, as well as an equally luxurious set of hose, and a pair of black leather shoes. He sighed heavily as he looked

at himself in the mirror one last time; his family truly wasted too much money on maintaining appearances.

After donning his attire, he left the bath and instinctively headed to the dining room. He was quite early by the standards of his recent routine; as such, he caught his family off guard when he arrived at the dining room, where they were all seated, having a polite conversation as they waited for him to arrive.

Upon entering the dining room, his family glanced over at him with shocked expressions; they were not expecting him to have such a refined appearance. Even Lambert gazed upon Berengar with envy. Sometimes it took a change in hairstyle to reveal the full potential of one's appearance. Henrietta blushed at her brother's striking demeanor and looked away; even his mother, Gisela's mouth, hung agape, which she quickly covered with her hand. Sieghard looked upon his son and heir with a gaze of fatherly approval. Finally, the boy he had raised appreciated his taste of the finer things in life. However, he wondered how the little bugger had managed to style his hair in such an imposing manner.

Seeing his family's odd expressions, Berengar touched his face with his right hand.

"What is it? Do I have something on my face?"

In unison, his family members shook their heads in silence, with various emotions in their awkward gazes. After confirming his appearance was tidy, Berengar sat down at the table across from Lambert and lifted his hands as he prepared for the morning grace. However, his family was too busy examining the change in appearance to notice his posture.

After a few moments of silence, Berengar looked up at his father

"Father? Do you not wish to say grace this morning?"

Having the memories of Julian, Berengar was now a closet atheist. Nevertheless, he still put on the appearance of a devout Catholic because he knew the consequences a man of science would endure in this primitive era. It would take decades, but maybe he could usher in the scientific revolution a bit earlier than in his own timeline if he worked hard at it.

After snapping out of their trance, his father began to speak his prayer as the family listened. Afterward, the family began to dig into their meal. While cutting apart his pork sausage with his utensils, Berengar overheard Lambert reporting his previous day's activities to their father.

"Father, did you know that Berengar spent the whole day plowing the fields with a peasant yesterday?"

Their father, who was just about to bite into his sausage, gazed over at Berengar with a confused look on his face.

"You plowed a field?"

Berengar would not resort to disparaging the friend he had made the previous day to save face among the nobility; as such, he had no shame in his voice as he admitted to his day's venture.

"Yes, father, I suppose that's why I took the day off from my morning exercise; overexerting oneself will have negative effects on the body."

This confused his father further; why would he take time out of his exercise schedule to plow a field? He could not help but inquire about the details.

"Any reason in particular?"

Lambert sneered at Berengar as if he had caused a loss of favor for Berengar with their father. However, the words that came next astounded him.

"Well, you see, father, I had this brilliant idea about improving crop rotation, however as you know, I am not a farmer, so I sought out a professional's opinion on my theory. The man turned out to know his craft quite well, and as we got to discuss the feasibility of it, we decided to try it out; and I am a man who leads by example, so I picked up a plow and got to work."

Lambert scoffed at this response; how could Berengar develop a new innovation for agriculture all on his lonesome? Clearly, this was a facade his older brother was putting on to turn the situation to his advantage. As such, Lambert immediately questioned Berengar about his so-called innovation. He would catch his older brother in his lie and reveal to everyone that Berengar was a fraud. A wicked sneer curved upon Lambert's lips as he thought to himself.

'Older brother, you are still too naive to play these games with me.'

After which he voiced his concerns aloud

"You say you invented an innovation of crop rotation, and what might that be?"

Berengar stared at Lambert coldly once again, which instinctively caused the teenage boy to shiver. After staring him down, Berengar scoffed at the impertinence of his little brother's statement.

"Even if I described it to you in vast detail, you would not be able to comprehend it. You do not have a mind for agriculture, little brother."

Lambert was infuriated by this response; he had not expected his older brother to attack his weak point. It was true that Lambert did not know the first thing about agriculture, nor did he understand engineering. He had only ever heard the phrase crop rotation before; he hadn't the slightest clue how it functioned. That was not the responsibility of a noble scion like himself.

Before he could respond to Berengar's allegations, Berengar had already seized the initiative and addressed their father with a tone of great respect.

"Father, if you wish to know the details, I won't hide anything from you, but I fear it might be a waste of our time together as a family, as I'm certain I would only bore the children with the intricate details of crop rotation."

Lambert was furious at this point. Did Berengar seriously place him in the same category as Henrietta? As if he was some small child? He was only a few months away from his 16th birthday, which would make him a man in the eyes of God and men. Despite his internal protests, the boy still did not manage to get a word out, as their father, Sieghard, agreed with Berengar's terms.

"You're right, Berengar; there are more important matters to discuss as a family right now; For example, How did you manage to get your hair to look like that?"

Lambert, who at that moment had stuffed his mouth with a slice of sausage, nearly choked upon it after hearing his father's words. Berengar was also surprised at his father's words. The old Baron truly did have a fascination with fashion. Though quickly, a light flashed in Berengar's eyes as he thought of this as an opportunity to coerce his father into engaging in proper hygiene.

"I'm afraid it won't work for you, father..."

Sieghard could practically feel his heartbreak as he heard such words. He could not explain why, but after gazing at his son's dignified appearance that was better suited to royalty, he needed to know how to make himself look so majestic. Of course, he unwittingly fell into Berengar's trap.

"Why not?"

a sound of panic had entered Sieghard's voice as he practically stood up from the head of the table after hearing such dire news. Berengar, on the other hand, had to prevent himself from smiling; sometimes, it was too easy to manipulate his father into doing his bidding.

"Because you don't bathe frequently enough."

After hearing Berengar's words, hope surged in the old Baron's heart. If that were the only problem, then he would bathe just as much as his son if he had to. He didn't care if

people made fun of him for doing so as long as he could have the glistening golden hair of his son. Realizing that his father had thoroughly grabbed onto the bait, Berengar decided to set the hook in and reel in the catch.

"The product I invented to style my hair this way only works on clean hair, though I promise you even if you work up a sweat, with this solution, your hair will stay intact like mine. Though, you do need to clean it off again at night."

This was complete and utter bullshit, but if it meant he could improve the hygiene of another member of his family, so be it. A little white lie like this never hurt anyone. By the time the breakfast had been finished, his entire family, except for Lambert, were convinced of the values of proper hygiene. The Baron had begun to draft plans for the entire servant staff to wash their hands throughout the day regularly. Berengar left the dining room with a giant smile on his face; he was one step closer to introducing a sense of modern hygiene to his family's lands.

Hopefully, this clean lifestyle would catch on soon enough; he could not help but fear an epidemic breaking out because people were uneducated about disease and filth. For the time being, this was sufficient; after all, the people he regularly contacted would be forced to practice some degree of basic hygiene. His next stop was to visit Gunther; as a member of the peasant class, the man was instrumental in Berengar's plans to implement the four-field system across all farms within the Barony of Kufstein.