

Tyranny of Steel

Chapter 17

Chapter 17: Immoral Temptation

From the view of the carriage, those dwelling inside could see the Castle of Kufstein in their sights; they had been traveling for nearly a week now and finally arrived at their destination. Inside the luxurious carriage were two individuals in their teenage years—Lambert, and Linde, who had spent the entire journey in silence. Every time Lambert attempted to speak with Linde, he was given a deathly glare and a crack of the whip. Eventually, he decided to mind his own business. The only thing that made the trip bearable was knowing that his brother's life would soon come to an end, and he would be next in line for the title of Baron.

A rider was sent ahead of the caravan to ensure that the von Kufsteins were aware that the Count of Tyrol's daughter was approaching them. This was to avoid any awkwardness that may arise from randomly showing up in another Noble's territory. Even if she was traveling with the son of said noble; it would be a huge slap to the face of Baron Sieghard if she showed up unannounced. However, she did not write ahead out of fear of giving Berengar time to defend himself against her schemes; if what Lambert said was true, the young man had been slightly more cunning than she was led to believe. She blamed the lack of intelligence entirely upon Lambert and his inability to gauge his own brother's cleverness.

If her scheme was to work as planned, she would need to put on an act to entice Berengar into a room alone with her, where she would play with him a bit before ending his life. She wondered what his screams would sound like; would he have the high-pitched tone of his kid brother? or the deep grunts of a man? She was beginning to get aroused, thinking about the pain she would inflict upon her victim.

As the Carriage arrived in the Castle's courtyard, the Baron and his family came to greet the count of Tyrol's daughter. Even Adela had been present to show her respect to Linde's position, a position in which she was equal. Yet when Linde stepped out of the carriage and gazed upon the family, her cheerful facade nearly cracked when she saw that there was no character fitting Berengar's description lined up to greet her. Did this bastard seriously not give her any face? Where could he possibly be? This was outrageous. She was his liege's daughter! She thought about the suffering she would inflict on the feeble man for this slight and managed to keep her facade up as she greeted her hosts.

"Lady Linde von Habsburg thanks you for your hospitality"

Personally, she felt sickened showing any form of respect to the Barons who in her eyes were hardly a step above commoners. Yet, due to her noble obligations, she could not poorly represent her family in front of their vassals.

Sieghard and his family bowed respectfully to their liege's daughter, Adela was the only individual to remain standing, and that was because she was of equal status to Linde and would not lower her head to a peer. Sieghard declared in a voice loud enough for the entire courtyard to hear.

"You honor us with your presence; welcome to our humble abode; we hope you find your stay to be adequate."

Sieghard had said a similar thing to Adela, and Adela seemed to be thoroughly enjoying her stay. Still, like a shrewd man, the old Baron could tell at a single glance that Linde was putting up an act to maintain face and inwardly looked down upon them for their Castle, which was practically destitute compared to the lavish Castle her family dwelled in.

"I'm sure it will be enough."

The strawberry-blonde-haired vixen said in an indifferent tone. She was too preoccupied with being upset over Berengar's absence to be concerned with the inelegant trappings she found herself surrounded with. She could no longer bear the insult and inquired about Berengar's whereabouts.

"Your son tells me he has an elder brother, Tell me, where is he right now? Is he not aware of my arrival?"

And there it was, the uptight, snobbish attitude in which Sieghard and Gisela pitied their second son for having to deal with. If they knew what was going on behind the scenes between the couple, they would never allow the marriage to occur. Unfortunately for everyone involved, they were unaware of Lambert's suffering.

Sieghard had an awkward expression on his face; Berengar had set out early in the morning, saying something about "installing pipes in a field." He truly did not know where his eldest son was at the moment.

"I'm afraid I don't exactly know his whereabouts; he said something about installing pipes in a field and left early in the morning. I apologize on his behalf for his abs..."

Before Sieghard could finish his sentence, a hand was raised in the air cutting him off. Linde was firmly holding her palm face up at him, informing him to be silent.

"No need for an apology; I expect to hear it straight from his mouth when I see him later tonight. I assume he will be home in time for the feast?"

Sieghard had a look of concern on his face; this girl was not easy to please; he had to be sure to lecture Berengar to apologize properly to her later that evening. They could not afford to offend their liege's family. All he could do was agree to her conditions

before leading her into the Castle and showing the young lady the lodgings she would be staying at during the duration of her visit.

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Meanwhile, in Gunther's field, Berengar and the townsfolk quickly installed the first set of irrigation pipes. He had received notice from Ludwig early in the morning that he had finished production on a set of irrigation pipes and had enough to fill up a single field. As such, the young lord had rushed out of his quarters and aided in installing them. He worked side by side with the peasants as they connected the wheel line irrigation system across the field.

After it had been entirely set up, Berengar was given the honors of activating the system; within seconds, water sprinkled from the thin steel wheels, which were stationed every few feet across a long steel pipe that supplied water to the aforementioned wheels.

Cheers echoed across the field as many villagers had gathered to witness Berengar's latest invention, and it did not disappoint. Gunther and his family practically wiped tears from their eyes as they saw the irrigation functioning properly. This meant he did not need to spend nearly as much energy watering his crops every day. This was truly a great day for his family and the village.

After the cheering had settled, Berengar cleared his throat and spoke with an authoritative tone.

"Citizens of Kufstein, I present to you the Wheel Line Irrigation System! Our industrial sector is currently working on producing many of these devices, enough to fill all the fields of our humble domain! I hope this makes your lives easier in the coming days!"

A thunder of applause alongside cheering could be heard all the way to the Castle, and it did not go unnoticed. However, now was not the time to celebrate; the true celebration would come when the harvest came into effect. With all of the recent innovations, it would be an unimaginable yield this year.

After saying his farewells to the villagers, Berengar returned to the castle. He quickly engaged in his nightly bath after dressing in a particularly exquisite black velvet doublet in gold brocade and matching breeches. After all, now that he was engaged, he figured he should dress nicer, even if the attire were a bit too gaudy for his tastes.

However, when he entered the dining room, all eyes were set upon him, something to which he had become accustomed to. However, the glances of Lambert and the stunning woman sitting next to him particularly caught his attention. He had not seen Lambert in over half a month; it was no surprise he was acting this way when Berengar's physical transformation had even stunned his family members who witnessed it in full.

Though Berengar did not care in the slightest about his vile brother's opinion, what caught his glance was the heavenly beauty sitting next to Lambert. She had to be the most beautiful young woman he had seen in the entirety of his two lives. Was that Lambert's fiancée? He instantly felt envious of his younger brother and thought to himself.

'Fuck what kind of shit luck do I have to get stuck with the 12-year-old cousin when that scheming prick gets an angel like her?'

Meanwhile, Linde had an even stronger reaction to Berengar's appearance. Her heart began to beat rapidly as she saw the suave appearance of the healthy young lord in front of her. He was nowhere near what Lambert had described to her. He was fashionable, he was handsome, and most of all, he was tall, unlike his kid brother.

It took the sadistic vixen all of three seconds to change her scheme from seduction and assassination to seduction and enslavement. Why the hell should she bother with a little twit like Lambert when the heir of the von Kufstein family was the prize catch. If she could make Berengar her slave, she would be the happiest mistress in the world! Sure Lambert was good-looking and had his boyish charms, but he could not compare to Berengar; she was furious that she had been tricked into an engagement to the second son. She began to wonder why she was constantly given misinformation these days.

'Who was the idiot who said that Berengar was a sickly, indolent, wastrel? She would have that fool's tongue cut out for speaking such slander!'

The lustful glances exchanged by Berengar and Linde did not go unnoticed by those who were sitting at the dinner table. Lambert's face was beginning to turn red with fury, while Adela was pouting in silence as she thought to herself.

'Just because she has a large chest, that idiot is practically drooling over her! I won't forgive him for this!'

Finally, Sieghard had enough of the display and grunted in displeasure which woke the two strangers out of their trance.

"Berengar, are you not going to sit down?"

Berengar immediately recovered his calm and sat down and said grace with the family. He almost lost himself there for a second; he needed to remember that this girl was the fiancée of his little brother. Obviously, she was out to get him. If he fell for her charms, he was truly a dead man, something he did not want to repeat so soon after his previous experience with death.

While he was calming himself down, the stunning young woman introduced herself.

"Linda von Habsburg, daughter of Count Lothar von Habsburg, it is a pleasure to meet your acquaintance."

Deep down, the girl could barely keep a straight face without fawning over Berengar; she had acted too cordially; she was never this pleasant with other people, especially of a lower house like this. She, too, had to get a grip, or else she would fall prey to her own scheme.

Berengar had no choice but to introduce himself; he tried to behave himself as he could feel the deathly glare that Adela was giving him from his left side. In the end, he still sounded too flirtatious as he gave Linde his greeting.

"Berengar von Kufstein, son of Sieghard von Kufstein, and heir to the Barony of Kufstein, rest assured the pleasure is all mine."

Linde had no idea why but she coquettishly laughed at his remark. Thus resulting in Henrietta gagging at the display of immoral affection. She would not let this vixen steal both her big brothers! Something had to be done about this situation.

Eventually, the awkward atmosphere faded as the food arrived. Linde had a similar reaction as Adela when she first tasted the fine cuisine presented by the chefs. However, hers was far more exaggerated in an attempt to seduce Berengar. Every time she moaned in ecstasy at the taste, Berengar could feel a battle of wills in his mind. As if the angel and devil on his shoulders were advising him on two different paths. Damn this girl; she was too much of a succubus for a virgin like him to handle.

Seeing as the situation was spiraling, Berengar elected to leave the table before he lost himself to temptation. He excused himself early and headed for the bath. While he was fleeing the scene, Linde smiled wickedly; she had decided she would make this man her slave at any cost. Not a toy like all the previous suitors, but a dedicated slave, someone who would serve her for the rest of her life.

As she watched Berengar's fine behind walk away from her she devised a devious plan to ensnare him; after everyone in the castle had fallen asleep, she would approach Berengar's room with a flagon of wine and two chalices while dressed in her most revealing nightgown. She would persuade him to allow her entry to his bed chambers under the guise of inquiring about his absence earlier in the day. Afterward, she would pour him a drink which would obviously be drugged, not with deadly poison but a powerful aphrodisiac.

When Berengar could no longer contain his lust and pounced at her, she would subdue him and force him to recognize her as his eternal mistress, his owner, his Countess. Then when he had fully submitted, she would help him relieve himself. After a week, maybe even a month of proper training, she would give her chastity to him and swindle him into breaking their betrothals and getting together by faking a pregnancy.

It was the perfect plan, and it was all supposed to go swimmingly. So when it was finally over, all she could ask herself was, 'how did things end up like this?'