

Tyranny of Steel

Chapter 20

Chapter 20: Raising an Army

The sun rose in the clear blue sky above and shone through the open window of the Berengar's bed-chamber. Illuminating the scene of Berengar cuddling intimately with Linde. It would not be for many more hours before the rest of the Castle awoke and began clambering about. As such, Berengar spent the time playing with his new slave and asking her many of his queries. Some he already knew the answer to and was merely testing her loyalty. When she honestly answered all of his questions, he was satisfied with the results of her training.

Now that he had begun to trust her loyalty, Berengar had a peculiar interest in a rumor he heard recently. As the daughter of the Count of Tyrol, which was a region dominated by the Habsburg family and bordered the territory of the Duchy of Bavaria, Linde was in a much better position to gather intelligence than Berengar was. He was curious if she was aware of the inner workings of the royal court of Germany.

Though the title King of Germany and its sovereign territory still existed at this point, it was far from what you would call a unified Kingdom. Currently, the Duke of Luxembourg held the title King of Germany, though, over the centuries, the title had passed through many families' hands. Berengar had heard rumors about the Kingdom facing a succession crisis; when the current King died, there was a high possibility of internal conflict. Yet, he had no details about what was happening at the highest court of his country. However, Linde might know the details. Thus Berengar decided to see what she knew about it.

"Is it true the Kingdom is on the brink of civil war?"

Linda looked up at him with a concerned expression and thought to herself

'Is the Baron and his family not aware of the current calamity that looms over the kingdom?'

Having fully accepted Berengar as her master, she would not hide anything from the young lord; whatever he wanted to know as long as she knew an answer, she would unhesitantly give it to him.

"Of course! Why do you think my father is so interested in Kufstein's iron reserves? He wants to build an army second to none for the upcoming war."

Berengar narrowed his eyes at the attractive girl currently pressing her bare chest into his own as she clung to him.

"What exactly does he need such a powerful army for?"

A gorgeous smile appeared across the peerless beauty's face as she swiped the bangs of her strawberry blonde hair out of her eyes. She stared at Berengar with her sky blue pupils expecting a reward for her answer.

"He wants to become the Duke of Austria; when the main family presses its claim to the throne, he will turn on them and seize Vienna as his own."

Berengar patted the girl's head softly as if she were a pet and complimented her.

"Good girl! What else can you tell me about the current succession crisis?"

Linde could not stop smiling as Berengar stroked her red-gold hair with his firm but loving hand; she had no idea that being complimented by a master was so satisfying. She began to question why she had wasted her time as a dominatrix when being the slave felt so much more rewarding.

"Currently, the King of Germany is a feeble old man with no rightful heirs. He fathered no sons and only one daughter in his lifetime. The current claimants to the throne are his Nephew, the legitimized bastard son of the King's younger brother, who recently passed. The problem is, even if he is a legitimized bastard, he's still a bastard, and few people support his claim to the throne."

Berengar nodded at the information; this was valuable intel. He decided to reward the girl by playing with her well-endowed chest. Which startled Linde at first, but her face quickly became flushed as she closed her eyes, enjoying the treatment. However, after Berengar stopped, she realized he was waiting for her to finish her analysis.

"The second claimant to the throne is the Duke of Bavaria; his claim essentially relies on the fact that before the House von Luxembourg took over, his House the von Wittelsbachs were the Monarchs."

The divine seductress stopped her sentence after explaining the second claimant to the throne of Germany; she clearly wanted to be rewarded for each piece of information. Feeling the intel she provided was worth it, and in good faith, Berengar decided to indulge her as he pressed his lips against her own and twirled their tongues together for a few seconds before releasing. If she wanted to go any further, she would have to finish providing her report.

Taking the hint, Linde quickly revealed the last bit of information she knew about the ongoing fight for the throne.

"Lastly, there's the Duke of Austria; he married the current King's only daughter and wants to install his teenage son as King of Germany; as you know, my family is merely a Cadet Branch of the von Habsburgs who rule Austria. Thus my father plans to betray them when they march on Munich and seize the Duchy for himself."

Linde immediately blushed upon revealing the last of her knowledge regarding the current political situation the kingdom was facing. Clearly expecting Berengar to finish what he started with her. However, the next statement that came from Berengar's mouth immediately triggered the discipline he had brutally installed in the young woman over the past week.

A wicked smile appeared across Berengar's face as he saw the girl eying him up, waiting for him to conquer her. He wanted to see how far she had been conditioned at this point. As such, he gave a command in the most authoritative voice he could muster.

"Beg..."

The face of the youthful enchantress immediately became beet red as she followed his command and got on her knees spreading her lower lips for Berengar to see in all of its splendor.

"Please.... reward me, master!"

Berengar could contain his lust no longer and spent the remainder of the morning enjoying his new toy to the fullest extent. One could say that the activities they engaged in for the next hour and a half could be considered his morning exercise for the day. It was not until their bodies were filled with sweat that Berengar finally emerged from his room. Linde was instructed to wait until the coast was clear before she rushed back to her room down the hall from his. Once Berengar verified the absence of others, Linde subtly snuck back to her quarters as if the two of them spending the night together had never occurred.

Shortly thereafter, Linde had closed the door behind her, and Berengar's expression sank to one of deep concern as he thought to himself.

'It looks like I'm going to have to further my recruitment efforts...'

His next choice of action was to enter the bath and wash off the sweat that had accumulated across his body throughout the night and early morning. Having completed his bath and gotten dressed, he exited the private bathhouse his family had built and entered the dining room, where the rest of his family was waiting for him.

Including Linde and Adela, who were sitting opposite each other across the table. Adela was not pleased with the buxom beauty in front of her; over the past week, this strawberry-blonde-haired bimbo had interrupted all of her dates with Berengar and

purposely attempted to provoke him. What could be the reason for Linde to have a conflict with Berengar? Unless, of course, she was acting on Lambert's behalf.

Were the two brothers really so estranged that Lambert had to send his fiancée to instigate strife? Adela had begun to realize something the rest of Berengar's family was blissfully unaware of with only basic conjecture. There was a war of intrigue going on between the two siblings over the inheritance. The more she thought of it as a possibility, the more it began to make sense to her. She decided that she would have to ask Berengar about it later when she had the chance.

When Berengar sat down at the table next to Adela, he could feel the intense gaze of envy coming from Linde and began to question whether this slave of his had any sense of self-restraint. He instantly gave the unrivaled bombshell a glare signaling for her to act normal; if the rest of his family caught on to their current relationship, it would not end well for the two of them.

Once more, Berengar entertained breakfast with his family; nothing of importance happened. Lambert completely believed that his fiancée still intended on assassinating his older brother and was trying to seduce him. He did not have the slightest clue that the girl of his dreams had been completely stolen from him right under his nose by his elder brother.

After having a pleasant meal free of discord, Berengar departed from the castle and entered the field where his militia was being trained to use firearms and cannons. Their numbers had grown to approximately 250 over the past week, and despite there not being enough muskets and 12 pounders to go around, there had been a great deal of progress in their training. Berengar seriously needed to sell the steel stockpile as soon as possible to get the mines running at full capacity. It would be essential to surviving the upcoming war.

A few veteran men-at-arms belonging to Sieghard's standing army snickered at the pathetic peasants training with their hand cannons. They foolishly mistook the sophisticated musket capable of penetrating a knight's full plate with ease as the primitive firearm currently in use in a few feudal armies. If they had known that the invention of the musket ushered in the end of the era of Knights and men-at-arms like themselves, they would be filled with despair.

Each musket was issued its own socket bayonet, a technology that eliminated the need for pikeman and swordsman. The pike and shot era never had a chance to come to fruition the moment Julian was reincarnated as Berengar. It was not until the 12-pound cannon made a display that the veteran soldiers began to feel a sense of worry at the arms in use by the peasants.

The 12-pound cannon Berengar had designed was based on the 19th-century smoothbore Canon busier de 12 or more commonly known in English-speaking circles as the 1857 12-pounder Napoleon, named after Napoleon III who commissioned it in

the 19th century. This cannon was light enough to be towed by horses and used as a field gun but fired a heavy enough round to be used effectively in sieges during the era it was designed for. It was capable of firing shell, shot, or solid ball. Judging by the lack of chemical industry, it currently only utilized ball and canister shots.

The primary differences between this piece of artillery and the one used extensively during the American civil war were that it was made out of pure steel, thus making it more robust than its bronze counterpart and that it did not utilize the more advanced friction primer to activate the firing sequence. As was pointed out earlier, Berengar had no chemical manufacturing process right now, and thus the complex chemical sequence needed to manufacture friction primers was unavailable. Instead, the cannon utilized the older vent primer and linstock to fire the cannon. It was a slower and less reliable process, but it was still used for centuries before the friction primer was invented, and it was the best option Berengar currently had.

When the cannons simultaneously roared and fired off rounds of canister shot at the straw targets, which were placed at roughly 400 yards away from the guns, the Men-at-Arms who were previously mocking the peasant militia nearly lost their minds. Hundreds of straw dummies were shredded apart by the canister shot provided by the three cannons. As veterans of multiple wars, they had never witnessed such a destructive weapon before and could hardly believe their eyes.

Berengar watched his militia form ranks and fired the muskets in their possession effectively. He could not wait until his militia could qualify as a true army. Despite being unarmored, the 250 man militia would soon be capable of providing a line of defense for the secluded mountain Barony against its potential enemies. Berengar wanted to armor them in munitions grade half-plate but could not get the approval. His father would never waste the production of armor on what he deemed to be mere peasant levies. If the peasant militia found themselves facing muskets, the armor would be practically useless. However, against armies equipped with bows, crossbows, and hand cannons, the armor Berengar had in mind was more than capable of defending against such threats.

Munitions grade plate was an invention that would normally be invented in the next century; unlike current plate armor designs; it was not hand fitted to the individual. Instead, it was mass-produced with the intent of equipping common soldiers. Berengar would never supply his father's forces with the technology he created, they did not answer to him, and he felt as if his father would carelessly hand over the weapons for reverse engineering to his lieges. As such, he had to play down how effective the weapons really were when in discussions with his father.

After aiding in the training of his militia, he returned to the Castle where he saw Adela waiting for him outside his bed-chamber with a letter in her hand. Naturally, his interest was sparked, and as such, he opened his door and allowed the young girl inside.

"You have something you want to tell me?"

Adela nodded with a pure smile on her face as she handed the letter to Berengar; it was from her father and concerned about purchasing the steel ingots lying in his storehouse. Berengar was extremely delighted when he saw the price offered and had no reason to negotiate; it was well above what he considered a fair price. Evidently, the Count of Steiermark was also preparing for war. Berengar was so excited by the news that he picked the young belle up in the air and kissed her on the cheek, which instantly caused her to blush. However, before she could protest, Berengar placed her down and patted her head.

"You just made me a delighted young man! I haven't even found a potential buyer yet, and you have already done the work for me!"

Linde may have the appearance of a goddess and was the perfect slave, but she was far from wife material. On the other hand, Adela played that role perfectly, and Berengar was confident that she, too, would be as gorgeous as Linde one day. Berengar was completely satisfied with his romantic side of life, all he needed was two girls by his side, any more, and it would become a hassle. He had no desire to become another shitty harem protagonist.

Berengar spent the rest of the evening walking around the courtyard with Adela; lately, he had been too preoccupied with training Linde, and he could not afford to neglect the relationship with his future wife. After a long evening of walking and enjoying the sunset, The two finally parted ways when the sun went down. She was still too young to be involved in Berengar's nightlife. Luckily he had a properly aged beauty who would do whatever he asked waiting for him in his bed-chamber when he returned. The master and slave spent another night enjoying each other's warmth, and the rest of the family was none the wiser.