

# Tyranny of Steel

## Chapter 9

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*Chapter 9: a Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work.*

After a hard day's work, Berengar sat down next to the poor farmer known as Gunther and shared a wineskin with the man as he wiped away the sweat from his brow with the sleeve of his luxurious doublet. As the two rehydrated, Berengar suddenly remembered his most important reason for entering the fields. As important as advancing the agricultural technology of his family's land was, there was one matter that truly kept him awake at night.

"Hey Gunther, do you have about a pound of Lard I may purchase from you?"

That's right, Lard! No matter how important advancing the agricultural system of his family's land was, it was a process that would take many years, possibly even decades, to fulfill truly. Right now, he desperately needed lard to create pomade so he could get his appearance the way he desired. I mean, sure, his family probably had lard in its kitchen, but the cooks were awfully stingy about the resources he could take out on a whim. If he kept stockpiling lard sooner or later, he would have to explain to his father that he was using it to create a primitive hair gel.

Only once did he use the greasy residue from his natural grime to fix his hair, and he immediately regretted it; the entire day, he felt grossed out knowing that the sweat and dirt produced by his body were used to style his hair; it was simply unsanitary! After the first day of his transmigration, he opted never to resort to such filthy habits ever again. Thus he had been parting his hair ever since and felt it did not fit of this handsome face he had acquired.

Gunther had a hard time believing this young lord's behavior; even now, after helping a lowly peasant like himself plow and seed his fields for the entire day, the Baron's son was asking to purchase lard off of him instead of outright confiscating it.

"Milord, all of this land belongs to your family; everything I produce belongs to ..."

Before Gunther could finish his thought, Berengar raised a hand and cut him off. With a dignified expression, Berengar smiled at Gunther and preached his ideology.

"I'm a strong believer of the saying a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. You tell me what you think the lard you have put so much effort into producing is worth, and I will pay it."

Gunther stared at Berengar with an astonished look; he had never met such an enlightened noble before, yet what Berengar said next was like a dream come true for a lowly peasant such as himself.

"One day, when I rule over these lands, I will pay every man the worth of their labor, regardless of the class they were born into."

A small tear formed in Gunther's eyes as he heard the pleasant words of Berengar; if this were an ordinary nobleman, he would never believe such an outrageous statement. Yet, Berengar, a man with obvious physical frailty and of noble birth, had stood side by side with him, helping him plow and seed his fields so that together they could introduce a new system of crop rotation. The noble scion did it without demanding for anything in return."

After considering Berengar's offer for quite some time raised three of his fingers.

"Three pfennigs"

Berengar thought it was a fair price as such, he reached into his doublet and pulled out a small satchel which contained a pouch of small white coins; he pinched three of the small coins with his fingers and pulled them out of the satchel, handing them over to Gunther with a smile on his face.

Gunther, on the other hand, was staring madly at the three white coins. When he was said "three pfennigs," he referred to the copper pfennigs, not the white ones, which contained at least 50% silver within the metallic mix. These were worth far more than he had asked for.

After gaping at Berengar like an idiot for a few moments, he finally recovered from his daze and handed them back to the young lord.

"Milord, when I said three pfennigs, I was referring to the copper ones, not the white ones."

Berengar looked at Gunther with a look of confusion on his face; in his entire memories, the young nobleman had only ever encountered the white pfennigs. He was entirely unaware that a separate currency with the same name existed and was worth far less.

After hearing such a thing existed, Berengar couldn't help but feel disgruntled. He could not believe the currency used in this society was primitive. He would investigate this at once and develop a plan to rehash the currency used in this feudal society. He swore

even if he had to create his own currency, he would fix this backward system that Kufstein currently used.

Luckily for him, this would be within his power as the Baron of Kufstein when he succeeded his father. Much like during the timeline of his previous life, sometime during the 12th century, the German King was no longer able to enforce the regalia of minting coins. Thus the minting process fell to the authority of every local town and lord. The value of a coin from one barony could be worth more or less than the value from another.

It was truly a maddening system. However, if you thought the Kingdom of Germany was a mess, then the Holy Roman Empire as a whole was far worse; there was no uniform currency throughout the entirety of its territory. While the Kingdom of Germany and its domains used the pfennig, or penny as it would be translated to in modern English as the most common currency, the same could not be said about the other Kingdoms the Empire comprised of.

Though he may be a baron, at the very least, he could simplify the coinage minted in his territory when he came to power. However, for now, he had to endure the stupidity of such a foolish system. After thinking it through, Berengar folded Gunther's hand, which currently held the three pfennigs, and smiled.

"Three pfennigs is three pfennigs as far as I'm concerned. When I come to power, I will mint new currency; made of solid gold and silver so that its value is absolute."

It did not take Berengar long to come up with a new system; after all, he had the memories of his past life, and eventually, Germany got its act together and minted pfennigs and marks. Marks were made out of gold, while pfennigs were made out of various materials and eventually lost their value almost entirely.

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However, he would not be foolish enough to compromise the integrity of his coinage; as such, he vowed to make all pfennigs made out of silver and all marks made out of gold. In a time like this, with such a small population, such a currency system would work well domestically and in trade with other regions.

Gunther eventually came to accept the excessive price and delivered the lard in a ceramic jar to Berengar. He couldn't help but be curious about why Berengar needed a pound of lard when his family's kitchen would be filled with it. Once again, Gunther voiced his thoughts aloud, though this time, when he realized what he had done, he only slightly flinched as he was aware of Berengar's character at this point. After his instinct took hold, he could hear Berenger chuckle at him.

"You will know when you next see me."

With that, Berengar placed the jar in one of his horse's saddlebags and hopped upon it as he waved goodbye to Gunther.

"I will see you again soon, my friend, but for now, I need to retire for the evening."

After which, Berengar slapped his spurs against the exquisite destrier's torso and rode off towards the Castle's gates. By the time he arrived at the gates, the beautiful orange sunset which filled the sky had already begun to fade, along with the light of day. His first order of business was to take a bath as quickly as possible. However, upon entrance, he was immediately greeted by his little sister Henrietta who jumped into his arms and wiped her face against his sweaty torso. A smudge of dirt and grime appeared on the young girl's face as she looked up to her brother in his arms, pouting as she did so.

"You're late... and dirty,"

she said coldly as she stared daggers at Berengar. It was unlike him to come home so late; not only did he rarely leave the Castle's walls, but he had never returned in such a pitiful condition before. She could only imagine what trouble he had gotten himself into.

Berengar laughed as he petted the young girl's head

"I appreciate you are worrying about me, but I'm fine. I just had some business to take care of.

Henrietta looked at what Berengar was holding, and her eyes filled with curiosity.

"What's that,"

she exclaimed as she pointed at the ceramic jar in his hands. Berengar was more than happy to answer his curious little sister

"Lard"

The young girl touched her lips with her finger with a questioning gaze; she had not heard the word before and was curious what it meant.

"Lard?"

Berengar smirked with a devilish grin; he decided to tease the little loli

"Pig Fat"

Immediately Henrietta's cute face scrunched up as she backed away from her brother with an abhorrent expression.

"Ewwwwwww!"

she cried as she ran away from her precious big brother; as she ran away, Berengar laughed to the point where he nearly fell on his knees. The little girl's expression was just too cute. Suddenly he remembered her face had a smudge of dirt on it, and he hollered at his sister from across the hall

"Henrietta, take a bath. You've got dirt on your face!"

Thus Berengar had to wait a bit longer for his nightly bath. After all, he was fine with letting his darling little sister take a bath first. As he walked back to his room, he could not help but feel a watchful gaze set upon him. He was certain he was being spied upon but refused to reveal it as that would only cause more trouble. As such, Berengar walked back to his room in an inconspicuous manner, never alerting the spy that he was aware of the presence.

After reaching the sanctuary of his room, Berengar let out a deep sigh of relief; he would have to be more cautious going forward. It would appear Lambert had set spies upon him to watch his actions. It would not be long before that little bastard attempted to assassinate him again. Berengar refused to die so quickly after being reincarnated. If Lambert wanted to unleash spies upon him, that was fine; two could play that game. Slowly but surely, Berengar was winning the hearts of the common folk, and they were the greatest potential spy force in the world. After all, not a single noble would expect the peasantry to report their activities to someone else.

Shortly after the event, Berengar took his nightly bath and once more tucked in Henrietta, who was now as clean as a whistle. After telling her a story about the heroes from the history of his previous life, he went back to his own bedroom, where he locked the door behind him and latched the windows. However, he decided to leave the curtains open, which allowed the light of the full moon to shine upon his sleeping body like a guardian angel watching over him.