

A Saga on the Descendents of Charlemagne (Dramatic Entry)

Our story begins with King Louis IV. Growing up through a regency, the young lad grew up in the shadow of the influential Duke of Paris. Given the epithet “the Great”, Duke Hugues of Paris was not one to be trifled with. An ambitious man, he had eyes on the Kingdom of France, and with the backing of his vast holdings, it seemed that the Capet dynasty would soon usurp the young Louis and claim the French throne for themselves. Little did they know, the crafty Louis had other ideas in mind. Upon taking the throne at his fifteenth birthday, Louis set about to forge alliances and undermine the Duke in any way he could. The Duke of Paris, in his arrogance and overconfidence, did little to stop the youth, as he was already planning the decor of the royal palace.

Much to the Duke’s surprise, however, the young King had managed to secure marriages with the kings of Leon and England, and so the stage was set. With his newly forged alliances in hand, Louis IV, upon hearing from his Spymaster that the Duke was plotting to usurp the throne of France, confronted the Duke and demanded that he hand himself over to the captain of the guard for his treachery. Bemused, the Duke scoffed at the youth’s brashness and ordered his lords to rally the soldiers for war. And so war it was. The Duke called upon his holdings to take up arms against the young king, and, sensing victory, he collected his forces and marched on the French capital. Not to be deterred, the young Louis called his allies into the war, and massed the combined Leonese, English, and French army. Once in place, he led his soldiers into a massive all-out battle in mortal combat with the army of Hugues the Great. The loss of life was staggering, with thousands of men being cut down in the bloodshed. After a long and arduous battle, Louis IV came out on top and, with the momentum gained from his victory, marched his army toward the gates of Paris.

The Duke of Paris was in a bad way. He had managed to escape the battlefield, but was now holed up in his castle, surveying the bleak scene before him. English longbowmen picked off defenders on the walls, and with the morale of the defending garrison so low, the young king ordered his men to break down the gate and swarm into the city. As the combined English, Leonese and French army paraded down the streets, Louis IV was ahead of them, with his personal retinue of elite guardsmen. He marched into the Duke’s keep and demanded his surrender. With his armies in disarray and Paris under the King’s control, Hugues realized that there was no point in fighting any longer. Louis IV promptly threw the deposed Duke into the Oubliette, stripped him of all titles besides a minor county, and kept the Duchy of Paris for himself, subsequently moving the capital to Paris itself. With his kingdom under firm control, Louis looked outwards to expand the realm.

The region of Lotharingia was in dire straits. Having lost its suzerain overlord, it was at the mercy of German expansionism. Already, several counties were lost to the invading Krauts. In a sudden and unexpected move, however, the Duchess of Upper Lorraine converted to the Waldensian heresy, and gave the emboldened king an avenue to expand in the name of Christ. Using a great Holy War as his casus belli, Louis IV invaded the Duchy and razed the heretical filth in the name of God. After his conquest of Lorraine, Louis IV now had enough justification to

create the Kingdom of Lotharingia, reuniting the kingdoms of France and Lotharingia under Karling rule once more. But all was not well in Europe.

The King of Germany, taking after the religious upheavals unfolding around him, decided to lead a religious revolution and denounce the Papacy and its wealth, embracing the Cathar heresy and plunging his nation into years of religious turmoil. Louis IV, ever the ambitious and zealous ruler, saw a clear opportunity to strike at the vulnerable king. With the support of his allies he launched a grand invasion of Germany and secured the rest of Lotharingia as well as the Duchy of Cologne. While French conquest halted at these territorial gains, the kingdom of Germany would find very little time to rest, with invasions from the south by the Italians, as well as incursions by the Bohemians and the pagan rulers to the North.

Even as the great Louis IV basked in the glory of his holy conquests, it soon became apparent that the aging king was taking a toll from the severe stresses he was put through. His subjects began referring to him as “the Old”, and their reasoning was easy to see on the features of the King. With graying hair, an advanced age, and an overstressed mind, the old King was nearing his last days. The elderly monarch was barely able to celebrate his Golden Jubilee after 50 years of his reign. Shortly after, in the year of our Lord 986, October 17, Louis “the Old” passed on to the heavenly kingdom after years of dealing with severe stress. But the conquests of France were not over, not in the slightest.

For at the turn of the millennium, March 26, the great grandson of Louis “the Old” crowned himself Louis I, King of France, and Emperor of Francia. Soon after, the great grandson set up an antipope and deposed the reigning Pope, subjugating the Papacy and gaining immense sway over the whole of Europe. He was succeeded by Louis II, a genius and a kind man, who brought great gains to the Empire of Francia. At this time, the Empire of Francia had taken notice of the Umayyad Caliphate to its south, which had all but seized control over the entirety of Iberia. And so began a series of holy wars with the Umayyads, until they were eventually pushed out of Iberia completely, after a couple centuries of conquest and intrigue. With the ascension of Louis III “the Gentle” to the throne, Francia was a prosperous nation, and constructed several great works.

It was not until the reign of Emperor Adalbert I “the Lionheart”, that serious considerations were made toward the well-being of the pilgrims to the Holy Land. At the bequest of his liege, the Pope called for a mighty crusade to conquer the lands surrounding Jerusalem. Putting his wars on hold with the Umayyads for a while, the Emperor Adalbert I rounded up his brave troops and sailed for the Holy Land. There, righteous conquests were made and after a few short years, the French Crusaders, with their Christian allies, carved out the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the name of God. Adalbert, now given the epithet “the Lionheart”, granted these lands upon his kinsman Guiges “the Sword of Jesus.” Unfortunately for the Crusaders, a Jihad was called upon the new state of Jerusalem, and the kingdom fell to the hordes of Muslim conquerors. It seemed that no one could cease the tide of Islam over the Western world, that is, until the Emperor died and was replaced by Adalbert II.

A brave man, Adalbert II was renowned for his seething rage and inspiring courage. Upon taking the throne, Adalbert II was quick to advise a new holy war to reclaim the kingdom of Jerusalem from the heathens. With the Pope in agreement, a second crusade was called upon the heathens and Adalbert II quickly departed with his army toward the Holy Land. With

the memory of his father in his heart, Adalbert II fell upon the heathen forces with a holy fury that was akin to the vengeance of God Himself. Victory after victory, Adalbert II cut down the heathen armies with brutal efficiency, and soon broke down the gates of Jerusalem themselves, securing a valiant victory for the vengeful crusaders. Having carved out a crusader state that would survive through the ages, Adalbert II “the Hammer” returned to Rome and took part in a grand parade down its streets in view of thousands of cheering faithful. Upon returning to Paris, a new grand statue was quickly commissioned to commemorate the exploits of Emperor Adalbert II “the Hammer.” For centuries after, future French Emperors would look to Adalbert II “the Hammer” as a model for how a devout ruler should perform. Upon completion, this magnificent statue was soon after plated in pure gold, signifying the immense wealth of the righteous and fervent Empire of Francia.

From the struggles against powerful lords, to the grand crusades against the heathen nations, the French nation has proved itself to be a great unifier of all peoples and Defender of the Catholic Faith. From the crafty ambitions of Louis “the Old”, to the genius of Louis “the Gentle”, to the honorable and virtuous Adalbert “the Hammer”, the story of Francia is one full of valiant escapades and righteous conquests. As is only fitting for direct descendants of Charlemagne, the Karling dynasty shall be remembered through the eons as the greatest European dynasty to ever have existed.