

Steel 52

Chapter 52: No Father Should Have to Execute his Own Child

Berengar stood in a room alone with his mother, Gisela. The Baronness had quite enough of Berengar's fling with Linde and was currently confronting her eldest son about his misdeeds. She stared up at her son with a look of scorn on her regal face. He was quite a bit taller than her however, this did not prevent her from leering into his gemstone-like sapphire eyes. There was a degree of arrogance in her baby boy's gaze which caught the mature beauty off guard as she lectured him.

"Until now, I have put up with your little escapades with that vile woman because I thought you would grow sick of her company, and I could use it as an excuse to be rid of the vixen once and for all. Now I can see she has dug her claws into both of you two brothers."

Berengar could not help but chuckle at his mother's wording; she made it appear as if he was being manipulated by Linde when she was actually quite the obedient slave. This laughter did not ease his mother's fury as she continued to glare at her own errant son.

"What is so funny?"

Berengar knew that his mother was furious with his behavior, but he would never allow her to get rid of his favorite toy. As such, a wicked grin spread across his lips as he sneered at his mother's ferocious display.

"Linde does not have her claws dug into me, as you proclaim. In fact, the situation is quite the opposite. She obeys my every will and whim like an obedient little girl. It was true that she was the one to approach me, but I am the one who dominates in this relationship. I have no plans to get rid of her anytime soon, as she has proven to be quite the excellent concubine. Plus, as I am sure you have suspected, the child within her is my own."

He had no problems revealing this information to his mother, the woman had long since suspected this to be the truth, and he knew the woman would never betray him. Blood is thicker than water, and despite her opinion of Linde, she would not disgrace her family's reputation by making such information public.

However, Gisela's reaction was out of his expectation; she slapped Berengar across his cheek and chastised him for his behavior.

"Do you have any idea how scandalous your actions are! You have cuckolded your own brother and impregnated his fiancée! He would never forgive you if he were aware of this fact."

Berengar held his cheek, which had reddened upon impact; he felt humiliated by the strike but could contain his rising anger. After all, he would never harm his own mother. After calming himself down, he exhaled deeply before revealing the truth of Lambert's schemes to his doting mother.

"It is a punishment well deserved for the crimes of my seemingly pious little brother..."

Gisela looked at Berengar strangely; by the tone of his voice Lambert had done something unforgivable to him, but she would never imagine that the two brothers were so estranged that they were plotting against one another's lives.

"What did he do to you that would require such an extreme act of vengeance?"

Berengar took a few moments to organize his thoughts as he paced about the room, trying to figure out the best way to inform his mother of his own brother's outright treasonous actions. After a while, he stopped in the middle of the room and stared at his mother with a somber gaze.

"He tried to kill me... On three separate occasions that I know of, two of which he came incredibly close to succeeding."

Gisela was shocked by the news and faltered as she fell to her knees while holding her painful heart. Berengar saw her do so and quickly rushed over to support the woman. There were several minutes of silence between the two as the loving mother thought things through in her head. With this news, many things that were confusing in the past began to make sense. Ultimately she would not just believe Berengar's words and finally broke the silence when she had managed to recover her resolve.

"Can you prove this?"

Berengar nodded his head with a serious expression on his face; his mother knew that the boy was not lying by the look in his eyes. However, she would not believe it until she saw the proof herself. As such, she demanded to see it at once.

"Show me the evidence!"

Thus Berengar opened the door and led his mother to his room, where he took out the ledger, the letter, and a written and signed testimony from Ser Ingbert. Berengar had gone through great lengths to hide and secure these items. As such, it took him a while before he could get them into his mother's hands. These three items contained key authentication about all three attempts Lambert had made on Berengar's life.

When his mother read through all of the evidence Berengar had compiled against his brother, she sat down upon his bed in silence for many minutes. What Berengar had said was true, and the evidence he held in his hands was enough to convict Lambert on the charges of attempted fratricide and treason. It took some time for the woman to come back to her senses before she asked Berengar the most important question on her mind.

"Why have you not brought this to your father's attention?"

Berengar's expression softened as he looked upon his mother with a great degree of pity and empathy. He could not imagine the pain and suffering she was going through, knowing that her second son had attempted to kill his elder brother not just once or twice, but three times that could be proven. As such, Berengar got down on one knee and held his mother's trembling hand with his own while gazing into her soft, tear-filled eyes, and voiced his innermost thoughts about the dire question his loving mother had asked.

"No father should have to execute his own child..."