

Steel 59

Chapter 59: Render unto Caesar

After Father Antonio's departure, word quickly spread around Kufstein of the Church's actions and plots to usurp the Barony and install a puppet on the seat of power. Mostly thanks to Berengar's intricate spy network. Gisela, who had turned to God during her recent crisis, immediately confronted Berengar about his rash actions. She could not believe that he would so cruelly execute ordained priests of the church. As such, she scolded her eldest son as if he were a small child caught with his hands in the cookie jar.

"How could you do such a thing? Do you not fear the wrath of God?"

Berengar merely laughed at her comments with a smug grin on his face.

"If God truly cared about what mankind does on this great Earth, he would not allow his so-called Church to be ruled by murderers, rapists, and thieves."

The way Berengar spoke about God was indeed blasphemous from the eyes of a God-fearing woman like herself. Gisela could not believe Berengar viewed the church in such a manner. She further emphasized the seriousness of the situation to her eldest son.

"You will be excommunicated for this, maybe even damned as a Heretic!"

Berengar looked at his mother with a look of pity as he began making her question her beliefs like the serpent he was.

"Mother... have you ever actually read the Bible?"

Gisela looked at her son like he was an idiot before proclaiming

"Of course not; it is up to the Clergy to decipher God's word! You should know this Berengar!"

Berengar merely shook his head as he pulled a large leatherbound book out of his desk, and placed it on the table. It was an accurately translated Bible in the German language. He pushed the bible in the direction of his mother, encouraging her to take a look for herself.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21"

Gisela looked at Berengar with a confused expression, but his meaning could not be clearer; he flipped to the page which contained the verse he had quoted, showing his mother the full context. Afterward, he pointed at himself and explained the verse with an indifferent expression on his immaculate face.

"I am the Caesar of this land, according to the words of Christ I hold all authority in this earthly domain we call the Barony of Kufstein. The Church should focus their efforts on spirituality and leave the politics of this world, to the men of this world."

Gisela could hardly believe her ears as she heard Berengar quote scripture and use it in a way to legitimize his ideas of the separation of Church and State. Berengar's views were extremely contradictory to the common belief of the Catholic Church, which maintained a large degree of political control over the European Kingdoms. Nevertheless, the words he spoke were true, and Gisela had no response to them. Seeing that his mother was conflicted, Berengar stood up from his desk and approached his mother, and wrapped his arms around her, showing her the same degree of comfort he showed Adela not too long ago.

"Mother, I know you're worried about me and my safety. I also know you are deeply concerned about my soul after what happened with Lambert. However, I promise you all I am doing is in the best interests of our family and the people of Kufstein."

Gisela accepted her son's loving embrace, and as she looked into his warm expression, her worries about him following the path of Satan began to vanish. He was still the gentle and kind boy she had doted on all of these years. Though his actions may seem extreme, he did them with the safety and security of his family and the people in his mind.

Berengar knew that his mother was shaken up by Lambert's true nature and was suspecting him to be equally as despicable deep down inside, and as such, he had to play the part of the loving son. Unlike Lambert, Berengar deeply cared for his family in both his past life and his current one. He spared Lambert because he could not imagine the suffering his family would go

through if he had executed the little scoundrel. If Lambert had never conspired against Berengar, then he never would have stolen his fiancée and forced him out of the family.

However, what Gisela did not know is that Berengar truly did have a wicked and ruthless nature. However, he reserved it entirely for his enemies, and at this point, the Catholic Church had become his enemy. By conspiring against him, Berengar viewed them as a threat to his existence and would not rest until their stranglehold over the German people and the lands they inhabited was fully liberated. He was willing to do great evil to achieve these goals.

If one could describe Berengar's personality, it was practically split in two. He was loving, kind, gentle, and caring for his loved ones. Yet, he was brutal, ruthless, sadistic, and cruel to his enemies. The reason why the people who loved him were so worried about his recent actions was that it was entirely out of the character he had always shown them. However, after hearing Berengar's explanation, Gisela chose to believe in his actions and supported him in his endeavors.

After all, the rest of the family was currently still processing their grief about Lambert's removal. Both Henrietta and Sieghard had shut themselves in their rooms, hiding from the world at large. Right now, the only person Gisela could speak to about her feelings was her son and her priest. Though now that she knew the Priest had conspired against her son, she would not be going to church any time soon. Instead, the mature beauty grabbed ahold of the Bible Berengar had given her and decided to spend some time educating herself about the word of God from the source directly. Gisela thanked Berengar for understanding her position and comforting her before leaving the room.

"Thank you, Berengar; you have always been and will always be my beloved son."

With those words said, she departed the room and returned to her quarters to look after her husband, who was currently intoxicated and depressed. Berengar, on the other hand, stayed in his quarters and continued to fulfill his obligations as Regent. It would be a matter of hours before he could have a break and continue to educate the common folk of Kufstein.