

## Steel 93

### *Chapter 93: Formal Abdication*

Berengar awoke bright and early once more. After getting in his normal exercise routine and taking care of his personal hygiene, he ventured to the Dining Room, where he would arrive at roughly the same time every morning. However, much to his surprise, both his mother and father were already sitting at the head of the Table. In his father's hands was a list of reports, ledgers, and laws Berengar had signed into place during his father's absence. There was a serious expression on his father's face. Berengar assumed the man was going to end his so-called solitary penance and assume the mantle of Viscount. However, what was actually about to transpire would greatly shock him.

It was not until Henrietta and Linde had arrived that Sieghard placed down the papers from his hands and addressed his family with the concerns he had deeply thought through since he secluded himself from the world at large. Henrietta was deeply concerned by her father's haggard appearance. She had not seen the man in quite some time, months even, and he had grown significantly older and frailer in this time period. This was the first time she witnessed the poor condition her father was in; his hair was now completely grey while being long, raggedy, and oily, his beard unkempt, and his eyes were sunken.

She barely even recognized her father, who used to be so filled with life. On the other hand, while looking a bit exhausted, Gisela still maintained her beauty, albeit at some expense. Neither of the two siblings' parents was as vibrant and healthy as they had been before Lambert's exile. Henrietta quickly voiced her unease.

"Daddy, are you okay? You look unwell..."

Sieghard drank from a glass of water before attempting to placate his loving daughter about his failing health.

"I'm fine, I have just become a little ill, but I assure you I will make it through this."

Though Henrietta was deeply concerned about the man's wellbeing, she chose to believe her father's words. After addressing his daughter's worries, Sieghard cleared his throat before making an announcement.

"Berengar, during my absence, you have turned out to be a far better ruler than I could have ever been. Not only have you expanded our territory and power, but you have begun to break ground on the construction of a magnificent city, all while balancing our coffers perfectly. Words can not express how impressed I am by your actions."

Berengar smiled as he heard the compliments from his father, who had been ruling the Barony of Kufstein for decades. However, the words that followed shocked him deeply.

"Because of this, it is with a heavy heart that I must announce that I am no longer in the condition to rule this land anymore. Thus today, I will formally abdicate in front of my Council and announce you, my only son and heir, as the new Viscount of Kufstein. I am sure you will go on to do great things in the future!"

Berengar was deeply astounded by these words; out of all the ends to his father's reign, he never figured the man would voluntarily abdicate and retire; as such, he had many questions for his father and his decision.

"I am to be the new Viscount? Then Father, what will you do?"

Sieghard chuckled lightly, which induced a slight cough; he told Berengar of his plans after recovering himself.

"I will retire to the countryside in a villa, where I will live out the rest of my days in peace. Some fresh air would do wonders for my condition."

Berengar sighed; this was truly the best end he could ask for his father. The man was now far too frail to go to war, as he had once desired; Hopefully, Sieghard could find some much-needed rest and cure the demons he harbored inside him, which began to manifest after what happened to Lambert.

He could tell Berengar was struggling with this news and decided to comfort him.

"Do not worry, my son, as I have already stated, you have done wondrously on your own, and I am certain you are destined for great things. I would only be holding you back if I continued to rule this land."

Though Berengar agreed with these words, he felt he would be missing something now that his parents would be moving away. On the other hand, Henrietta was concerned about her future and where she should go and, as such, asked her father like an obedient little daughter.

"Daddy? What will happen to me?"

The old Viscount stretched out his hand and grabbed onto his daughter's in an attempt to comfort her as he gave her one final order.

"You will stay here with your brother and obey his every command as if he were your father. He will provide for you and eventually find you a good husband to marry. I completely trust him in this regard."

Tears began to stream down Henrietta's eyes as she nodded her head in agreement. She could not make out the words she wanted to say and instead ran over to her father and hugged him. Linde, of course, was quite happy with the results. Despite the fact that Berengar currently held absolute authority in the territory due to his large and powerful army; the nobles were technically sworn in fealty to his father. As such, they had begun to grow quite rebellious with Berengar's many reforms. The only thing keeping them in check was the overwhelming might of Berengar and his military. With his father's formal abdication, they would have no excuse to disobey Berengar's orders and could not create any crazy conspiracy theories to justify the act of open rebellion.

After discussing things for some time, the family began to eat breakfast together. They did not have many more occasions to do so in the future, because of this they took advantage of this moment to enjoy time together as a mostly intact family. When the meal was finally over, Sieghard had gathered his Council in the Great hall where he sat upon the seat of power in Kufstein one last time. By his right-hand side was Berengar, who stood at attention.

When every person of political importance within the town of Kufstein had gathered in the room, Sieghard stood up from his chair and made a shocking declaration, one which would go on to resound in history as a deciding factor in Berengar's rapid rise to power.

Standing boldly in front of the gathered nobles, Sieghard made his decree for all to hear.

"I Sieghard von Kufstein, first of my name and the current Viscount of Kufstein hereby declare my formal abdication of power, and henceforth transfer my Land, and titles, and wealth to my only son and heir Berengar von Kufstein! All kneel before your new Viscount!"

With those words being spoken, every person in the hall kneeled before their new sovereign with a great degree of respect. Berengar was now officially the Viscount of Kufstein and would wield his power to a great degree. The changes he would make in the following months would thoroughly transform Kufstein into a semi-modern state and invoke the ire of the Church and Nobles alike.