

Longevity 117

Chapter 117: Zhao Ying: My Brother Became a General?

He looked at Zhao Ying. She was so youthful and beautiful, with the stunning visage of a young maiden. Chen Fen, a Commander of Five Hundred, felt his eyes brighten at the sight, but he quickly composed himself. "All the names from Sha Village are here," he asked gently. "Did your brother enlist in the army?"

Chen Fen himself seemed slightly astonished.

"My brother enlisted eleven months ago and also went to the Han battlefield," Zhao Ying replied softly. "But his name isn't on any of these three lists."

At this, a flicker of hope ignited in her heart. If her brother's name wasn't on the lists for the disabled or the fallen, didn't that mean he might still be alive?

"What is your brother's name?" Chen Fen inquired.

"Zhao Feng," she responded immediately.

"What did you say?" Chen Fen's eyes widened as he stared at her in utter astonishment. "Zhao Feng?"

"Has something happened to my brother?" Zhao Ying's expression changed. She could clearly see the shock on Chen Fen's face.

Did her brother do something wrong?

"How old is your brother?" Chen Fen asked again, suppressing his amazement.

"My brother is sixteen," she answered honestly.

"Wait a moment."

Chen Fen immediately turned and took a separate register from a soldier behind him. On this set of bamboo slips, there was only one name. He opened it and read:

"Zhao Feng, age sixteen, of Sha Village in Shaoqiu County. Conferred with the tenth noble rank, Lord of the Left. Appointed Deputy General of Qin. He enjoys an annual salary of five hundred stones for his rank and an official monthly salary of twenty-five stones for his post, for a combined annual income of eight hundred stones."

Upon reading this, Chen Fen was stunned.

This particular set of bamboo slips came with special instructions from above: the annual salary for this general was to be distributed only after all other soldiers in Shaoqiu County had received their pay. Furthermore, the payment was not to be handled by him, but by a higher-ranking official in person. Every distributing official held a copy of this register, as there was more than one Sha Village in Shaoqiu County. By sheer coincidence, Chen Fen was the one to encounter this.

Zhao Feng, Deputy General of Qin, with a status comparable to a Prefectural Governor. Though not yet a great dignitary governing a border region, he was undoubtedly one of Qin's most powerful figures.

I understand now why the Prefectural Governor gave special orders to treat the person in this register with the utmost importance. A sixteen-year-old Deputy General... that must be the only one in all of Qin, right? So this legendary figure is actually from a village in my own Shaoqiu County! Enlisted for less than a year, promoted to Deputy General, and advanced ten noble ranks. He cut down the Han Senior General, breached the Han Capital, and captured the King of Han, accumulating countless battle honors. The Great King himself issued a Royal Edict to proclaim his name throughout the entire army.

Holding the bamboo slips, Chen Fen's heart trembled with excitement. He never imagined that this legendary figure came from this small village, let alone that he would meet the man's own sister.

It had been nearly two months since Han was conquered and absorbed into Yingchuan County. During this time, under a Royal Edict from the Great King, Zhao Feng's heroic deeds were broadcast throughout the military to inspire the troops. While Zhao Feng's name was not widely known among the populace, the news had already spread through every military camp, reaching the Sharp Warriors, the Prefecture Soldiers, and even the Logistics Army.

For the soldiers of the Qin Army, their first reaction upon hearing of Zhao Feng's accomplishments was utter disbelief. How could someone who enlisted less than a year ago achieve such monumental feats? And he was only sixteen years old. What's more, it was said he had earned his merits starting from the Logistics Army, which made it all the more incredible.

Their second reaction, however, was acceptance. The Great King himself had issued the Royal Edict publicizing Zhao Feng's battle honors to the entire army; who would dare to doubt it? The third reaction

was, naturally, a mix of emotions throughout the ranks. Zhao Feng's rise inspired ambition in countless soldiers. A recruit enlisted for less than a year had achieved such glory, becoming a Deputy General of Qin at sixteen and commanding an army of fifty thousand. Such power and honor—who wouldn't respect it? Who wouldn't be envious?

Some took Zhao Feng as their goal, while others were filled with jealousy. Many in the army believed his astounding achievements were purely a matter of luck. With millions of soldiers in Qin's forces, opinions naturally varied. Even if Zhao Feng knew of this, he couldn't be bothered to care.

Chen Fen snapped back to reality. He closed the bamboo slips and turned back to Zhao Ying, his gaze now filled with reverence. The change in his demeanor was starkly apparent.

This was the sister of Qin's youngest Deputy General. As the saying goes, when one person attains greatness, even their chickens and dogs ascend to heaven. Zhao Ying's status was no longer that of a simple village girl; she was the sister of a great Deputy General of Qin—and perhaps a future Main General or even Senior General. Her social standing had been utterly transformed.

"Sir," Zhao Ying asked again, looking at Chen Fen's strange, silent expression. "What exactly happened to my brother?"

She had already cried her tears and was filled with worry, but she still clung to the desperate hope that her brother might truly be alive.

"Miss—no, no, Young Lady!" Chen Fen waved his hands frantically, his expression now one of utmost reverence. "Please, you mustn't call me 'Sir'."

He had shifted from calling her "Miss" to "Young Lady," an attitude that clearly showed he now saw himself as her subordinate.

Zhao Ying was utterly bewildered, as were the surrounding villagers.

"What's going on?" they murmured amongst themselves. "Why is that official being so respectful to the Zhao family's girl?"