

## Longevity 134

### Chapter 134: King of Qin's Wrath! Zhao Feng's Rise! (Part 2)

Could the Prime Minister have already succeeded? No, that's not right. If the Prime Minister had succeeded, the envoy from Qin would have surely mentioned it.

"According to this old official's view, something must have happened in the Han Land after Qin annexed it," Pang Xuan immediately added.

Hearing this, Zhao Yan slowly nodded.

Just then, a cry came from the entrance of the great hall. "Report! Urgent intelligence from the Han Land!"

A Zhao soldier rushed in, clutching an unopened secret report.

"Bring it here quickly!" Zhao Yan shouted.

A nearby temple official immediately went to present the secret report. When Zhao Yan opened it, his previous confusion over Qin's request for an alliance instantly vanished.

"Hahaha," Zhao Yan laughed excitedly. "I was wondering why Ying Zheng would suddenly seek an alliance with our great Zhao, but it turns out it's because rebellions have broken out in the Han Land!"

Rebellions have erupted all over the Han Land, causing Qin to suffer heavy losses. Even several granaries have been burned down!"

"In that case," Pang Xuan instantly understood, "Qin must be worried that our great Zhao will seize this opportunity to attack them. That is why they are seeking an alliance."

"Exactly," Zhao Yan laughed proudly. "Although our great Zhao doesn't border the Han Land, Wei does. With a single decree, I could send soldiers through Wei to attack Qin at any time. With the ongoing chaos in the Han Land, Ying Zheng must be at his wit's end. Ying Zheng, oh, Ying Zheng, he is finally afraid of me!"

At that moment, a veteran general, the foremost among the military officials, stepped forward. "In this humble official's opinion, we must not sign this treaty with Qin," he warned. "This chaos in the Han Land might be a trick—a deliberate ploy by Qin to deceive our great Zhao into an alliance."

He was none other than Lian Po, a battle-hardened veteran who had served several Zhao rulers. The Zhao people hailed him as a War God, on par with Qin's own War God, Bai Qi.

Once, during the Battle of Changping, Lian Po had led the army and held Bai Qi to a standstill. He only suffered defeat because the King of Zhao fell for Qin's divisive strategies and changed generals mid-battle. This allowed Bai Qi to break the Zhao army and claim a great victory at Changping. After that, the national power of Zhao declined, and it lost its chance to unify the realm. In that single battle, hundreds of thousands of Zhao's young and elite soldiers perished. This was a hatred seared into Lian Po's memory, and into the hearts of countless Zhao people.

Hearing Lian Po's words, Zhao Yan frowned. "According to you, old general, am I so easily deceived?"

"This old official wouldn't dare," Lian Po immediately replied. "But the People of Qin are cunning. We must be extra cautious."

"I will decide this matter myself," Zhao Yan declared. "Alright. If there's nothing else, the court is dismissed! Minister Pang, you will stay behind."

The court officials dispersed, leaving only Pang Xuan in the great hall.

"Old general," Zhao Yan said with a broad smile as he slowly descended the steps, "do you know why I asked you to remain?"

"The Great King wishes to be a wise ruler who expands his territory," Pang Xuan replied with a smile.

"Hahaha!" Zhao Yan laughed heartily. "The old general truly understands me." A hint of ambition flickered across his face. "Ever since I took the throne, there has been endless debate in the court and among the people. The only way to silence them is to expand our borders. Ying Zheng destroyed Han; I can also destroy a state and expand the territory of our great Zhao. I hope you will assist me, old general." As he spoke, Zhao Yan placed his hand on Pang Xuan's.

"This old official swears to serve the Great King to the death!" Pang Xuan immediately declared with a deep bow.

"I am giving you an army of 300,000," Zhao Yan said, his eyes flashing with a cold light. "March them secretly to the border of Yan. When the time is right, attack immediately."

"When our great Zhao attacks Yan, our biggest concern will be Qin sending soldiers to attack us," Pang Xuan noted. "This intelligence report was secret, but we must still consider Lian Po's words and be cautious regarding Qin. If Qin attacks after we mobilize our forces, our great Zhao will be in grave danger."

"Rest assured, old general," Zhao Yan said confidently. "I have already been scheming in secret. If my plan succeeds, I can guarantee you an unobstructed path to attack Yan. Moreover, Qin will absolutely not raise soldiers against our great Zhao." He sneered, a triumphant look on his face. "Ying Zheng is destined to be trampled under my feet."

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「In Qin, Yong City!」

As the former capital of Qin, Yong City's defenses were built to scale, and its prosperity was second only to Xianyang within the great Qin empire. In addition, the old Qin Royal Palace was located within its walls. Should the King of Qin go on an inspection tour, Yong City would serve as his temporary residence.

Under the cover of night, at the back gate of the Yong City Royal Palace, the patrol was momentarily absent. A side door swung open, and a person dressed as a temple official gestured outside the palace gate. Immediately, dozens of men in black burst through the gate. With a clear objective, they rushed toward a location within the harem.

In the harem stood Dahua Palace, the residence of Empress Dowager Zhao Ji. At this hour, the palace was plunged into darkness. A few maids were on duty inside, but all were asleep. Outside, six temple officials stood guard.

For a monarch, the harem was a forbidden place. Other than the king himself, no men were permitted inside. Security in the harem had become even stricter after the incident with Lao Ai. Temple officials were subjected to layers of screening before being allowed to enter, eliminating the possibility of impostors.

As for Zhao Ji, ever since Lao Ai's treasonous rebellion—after which the two illegitimate children she had with him were dashed to death—she seemed to have been stricken with madness. She was often lost in a daze, behaving erratically. However, due to her status as the Empress Dowager, her care was constant. Attended by an Imperial Physician and numerous maids and attendants, she managed to survive. Yet, every night, she required a sleeping draught prescribed by the Imperial Physician to fall asleep.