

Longevity 164

Chapter 164: Betting on Zhao Feng's Defense! King of Qin Grants Authority!

"General Wang Jian, are you serious?"

"In the war to annihilate Han, Zhao Feng indeed performed excellently, but that only demonstrated his prowess as a valiant warrior. It did not prove he is a capable commander skilled at leading troops."

"To entrust the safety of Yingchuan entirely to him is simply too risky."

"A seventeen-year-old War General is ultimately too young to shoulder such a great responsibility," Meng Wu said gravely, his tone persuasive.

"If Wei sends troops, Wei Wuji will surely lead them himself. General Wang Jian, you must be aware of his formidability. His great reputation is backed by true talent for command," Huan Yi also spoke up.

Wang Jian did not respond to them, instead gazing steadfastly at Ying Zheng.

After a moment, Ying Zheng spoke. "Since it is your request, Minister Wang, I shall grant it."

"I thank you for your trust, Great King," Wang Jian immediately bowed.

"Tell Zhao Feng that as long as he can withstand Wei's attack and guard the gateway of Yingchuan for me, I will promote him to Main General when Qin conquers Zhao in the future."

"But should he fail, his crime will be judged accordingly," Ying Zheng said in a deep voice. His words contained both a reward and a spur to action.

"I accept the decree," Wang Jian responded at once.

Ying Zheng looked toward Huan Yi. "Marquis Huan."

"I am here, Great King," Huan Yi immediately replied.

"The two hundred thousand Sharp Warriors of the Hangu Pass Camp must be ready to reinforce Yingchuan at a moment's notice. The instant Wei City's defenses are breached is when you will mobilize," Ying Zheng said solemnly.

Huan Yi nodded immediately. "I accept the decree."

Wang Jian's strategy was clearly far too perilous for Ying Zheng's taste.

"Great King," Meng Wu spoke out, "now that the Crown Prince of Yan has been turned away by you, he should come next time prepared with state gifts to pay the price. By then, the war between the Zhao state and Yan will likely be at a stalemate, which will be the perfect opportunity for Qin to send troops."

"Therefore, my dear ministers, take this time to prepare well."

"I have already ordered Wang Wan and Feng Quji to prepare the provisions and baggage trains necessary for the army's campaign."

"We must not miss this chance to annihilate Zhao."

"I am counting on my three Senior Generals," Ying Zheng said earnestly, cupping his fist in a respectful salute to the three men.

Seeing this, the expressions of the three generals shifted, and they immediately bowed low. "We will not disappoint you, Great King."

"Senior General Wang Jian," Ying Zheng suddenly said, "your daughter is already carrying Zhao Feng's child, isn't she?"

As the words fell, Wang Jian was inwardly startled. How could the Great King know? Apart from the trustworthy servants in my household, hardly anyone knew about Wang Yan's pregnancy; it had not spread at all. In just a fleeting thought, Wang Jian understood: Ying Zheng had eyes and ears within his own residence. However, as a subject, one must be clear in their heart, but must not appear so transparent on the surface.

Wang Jian immediately composed himself and replied, "Indeed."

Beside him, Meng Wu and Huan Yi looked at Wang Jian strangely.

"After we achieve victory in this campaign against Zhao, I will decree a marriage between your daughter and Zhao Feng," Ying Zheng announced with a slight smile.

At these words, joy bloomed on Wang Jian's face. He bowed at once. "I swear to serve you loyally until death, Great King."

To be granted a marriage by the King of Qin was an unparalleled honor. His eldest son had already been betrothed to a princess by the King of Qin, merely awaiting an auspicious day to wed. For his daughter to also receive a Royal Edict of marriage was an even greater distinction, an honor unique to the Wang Family.

One by one, the surrendered soldiers from Han were escorted to Wei City by the Sharp Warriors stationed in Xinzheng.

Atop the walls of Wei City, Zhang Han watched these surrendered soldiers enter with a solemn expression.

"General," Zhang Han said with concern, "all the surrendered soldiers from Han have entered Wei City. Their numbers are now comparable to our own Sharp Warriors. If the Wei Army really attacks, are we truly going to use them?"

Zhang Han was clearly worried that these surrendered soldiers would turn on them while they were defending the city.

"The surrendered soldiers now form the Penal Battalion, and their morale is high. Have you not seen?" Zhao Feng replied with a casual smile.

"Their morale is high during training, yes, but if the Wei Army attacks as you predict, General, we will be facing hundreds of thousands of their soldiers. In a critical moment, I fear they truly cannot be trusted," Zhang Han said gravely.

"Don't worry," Zhao Feng said coldly. "If I dare to use them, then I am not afraid of them. Should they dare to cause trouble, kill them. This is their only chance. If they waste it, they will have no one to blame but themselves."

Zhao Feng was well-versed in history and knew that Heavenly Destiny was with Qin. He also knew the results of using a Penal Battalion.

There were over fifty thousand surrendered soldiers. If they seized this opportunity to kill the enemy and achieve merit, they could shed their slave status and become true soldiers, with a chance to one day reunite with their families. But if they dared to turn back in battle and betray Qin again, their entire families would be exterminated. To choose the latter would be their own doing.

"General, all the surrendered soldiers have been escorted to the barracks," Tu Sui reported, approaching Zhao Feng.

"Let's go. To the barracks," Zhao Feng said immediately.

「Inside the army camp.」

Twenty-three thousand surrendered soldiers were gathered on the training field, surrounded by Sharp Warrior archers of the Qin Army. Mixed among them were also unarmored members of the Penal Battalion. Following Zhao Feng's order, the entire army had prepared for war. All Sharp Warriors were fully armored and armed, ready for combat, just waiting for the Wei Army to dare an attack.

"I am Zhao Feng, Deputy General of Qin," his resonant voice spread across the training field, echoed by the Sharp Warriors until it reached every man. "By royal decree, I am tasked with defending Wei City."

"I won't waste words. Do you see the soldiers surrounding you? Among them, are there not your former brothers-in-arms?"

Hearing this, many of the Han surrendered soldiers couldn't help but look at the Sharp Warriors guarding them.

Sure enough, many immediately recognized former acquaintances. But unlike their own dejected and weak aura, their old comrades were filled with vitality, all of them dressed in Qin Army uniforms and armed with Qin weapons.