

Longevity 177

Chapter 177: Ying Zheng's Concern! (Part 3)

WOO! WOO! WOO!

The sound of horns echoed throughout Wei City.

Even though tens of thousands of corpses were piled up before the city, uncleared, and the entire battlefield was littered with stray arrows and shattered siege engines, the Wei army simply did not care. For Wei Wuji, as long as he could breach Wei City, he would allow his soldiers a proper burial. Fortunately, the weather was not hot, as it was still winter. Otherwise, the bodies that had accumulated over the past seven days would have engulfed the entire city in a horrific stench.

"Men of Wei!" Wei Wuji's voice boomed. "Today is the eighth day! Vanguard Army, on my command, attack! The first man to breach the city walls will be promoted four ranks and rewarded with ten thousand gold! For me, kill!"

With a loud roar, Wei Wuji once again pointed his sword toward Wei City. Pushing various siege engines, the Wei army advanced on Wei City in an orderly fashion, with shield-bearers at the front, archers behind, and the Vanguard Army pressing the attack.

This was the eighth day of chaotic battle. The Wei army had suffered over thirty thousand casualties. This was only because Wei Wuji was an adept commander; had it been someone like Wei Bo, who didn't know when to retreat, the casualties would have easily surpassed fifty thousand.

Atop the city walls, Tu Sui and Wei Quan stood shoulder to shoulder. Even Zhao Feng's personal guards were present. Aside from a few of Zhao Feng's most trusted generals, no one knew that he was no longer in Wei City.

"The Lord Commander said," Zhang Ming began, approaching Tu Sui and presenting a set of bamboo slips, "that Wei City must not fall, or all his plans will be for naught. General Tu, this was written by his own hand."

Tu Sui immediately took it and read.

"I have left the city. All military affairs in Wei City shall be commanded by Tu Sui. Imperial Guard Captain Zhang Ming carries the Royal Edict. Anyone who disobeys General Tu's orders shall be killed!" This was the message on the bamboo slips.

"This subordinate understands," Tu Sui nodded gravely.

He gazed at the advancing Wei forces. As they entered firing range, *SHING!* The sharp blade at his waist was drawn from its sheath.

"All soldiers, heed my command! Kill!" Tu Sui shouted.

A volley of ten thousand arrows erupted from the city walls, as stones from catapults soared through the air and crashed down. The great battle began anew. The assaulting Wei forces were once again mired in the hardships of the siege.

Wei Wuji stared intently at the front lines, a flicker of anticipation in his eyes. "Compared to yesterday, the Qin counterattack doesn't seem as strong today," he said slowly, the tense line of his brow finally relaxing into a smile.

"Surely, Your Majesty's psychological strategy has had a remarkable effect," a Wei General chimed in excitedly. "The Han Surrendered Soldiers in the city must no longer wish to fight our army."

"By my command," Wei Wuji declared, his hope of capturing Wei City instantly rekindled, "we will take the city today, in one fell swoop!"

Meanwhile, more than fifty *li* east of the Wei River, the water flowed with extraordinary speed. Ordinary boats simply could not navigate these turbulent currents. But to the north of this raging river lay the territory of the Wei state.

Wei Wuji was exceptionally cautious. Having led his army out on campaign, he had arranged numerous defenses along the border with Qin to prevent surprise attacks. He also placed patrols along the Wei River to intercept any Qin forces attempting to cross, ready to strike them midstream. However, at this particular crossing, its perilous nature meant that Wei Wuji's defenses were at their weakest. Although Wei patrols were present, their numbers were insignificant.

Just a few *li* from this very crossing, a contingent of the Qin Army was encamped, subsisting on dry rations. After a night of forced marching, they had arrived by dawn.

"General," a Qin Army Scout reported, quickly approaching Zhao Feng, "I have just returned from reconnaissance. There is a small number of Wei soldiers patrolling the other side of the Wei River. It appears to be a small camp of about a hundred men."

"The currents at Hongze Crossing are treacherous," Zhao Feng remarked with a hint of admiration. "Back when this ferry was in use, countless people drowned here, so it was eventually abandoned. However, Wei Wuji truly is a cautious old general to station troops at such a perilous crossing."

"General," Zhang Han asked respectfully, "when shall we cross?"

"Let the soldiers rest for half a day," Zhao Feng said with a smile. "Once the time is right, we will cross the river and attack Wei."

"General, what time is that?" Zhang Han asked, puzzled.

"You'll know when it comes," Zhao Feng replied with a cryptic smile, saying no more. His gaze turned toward Hongze Crossing, filled with anticipation.

「Xianyang, Morning Discussion Hall!」

"Great King," Yu Liao announced loudly, holding up a military report, "we have just received a dispatch from the Senior General. Our Lantian Camp's army of two hundred thousand has already breached Zhao territory. They have captured six Zhao cities, and now the Senior General is personally leading our forces in an attack on Quyang, a key military town of Zhao."

"The city is defended by Zhao's Senior General, Lian Po," Yu Liao continued. "The Senior General reports that the battle for Quyang will likely be a difficult one."

"Understood," Ying Zheng nodded, his expression composed. He then turned to Yu Liao. "Wei has always monitored Qin's movements. Now that our armies are deployed, Wei has surely made a move on Yingchuan, correct?"

"Reporting to the Great King," Yu Liao immediately replied, "Wei Wuji has already led his forces against Qin; it has been several days now. Furthermore, after Wei mobilized, the hidden Han nobility in Yingchuan County have gathered their private armies to rebel against Qin, causing constant chaos. General Li Teng is leading his Sharp Warriors to suppress them. This report is from General Li Teng."

"Has Zhao Feng requested reinforcements?" Ying Zheng asked with concern.

For this campaign to annihilate Zhao, everything was meticulously planned. Yet, Ying Zheng's one lingering concern was Wei City.

"We have not yet received any request for reinforcements from General Zhao Feng," Yu Liao quickly responded. "Presumably, he is still holding his ground without any issue."

"That is good to hear," Ying Zheng finally nodded, reassured.

But to be certain, Ying Zheng then added, "Qin has committed a considerable number of troops to this campaign against Zhao. I am most concerned about Yingchuan County. Wei Wuji's assault is ferocious, and he will not retreat without achieving a decisive result."