

Longevity 191

Chapter 191: Disposing of Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo! Reporting to the King of Qin!

After both men's battle armor and swords had been removed, Zhao Feng spoke.

"Chen Tao, Zhao Tuo."

"Do you two know your crimes?" he asked coldly.

"What crime have we committed? Our leading the troops out of the city was all to preserve Qin's territory and ensure the stability of Yingchuan," Zhao Tuo immediately retorted.

He knew that if he were truly charged with this crime, he would indeed be severely punished.

However, his defense was nothing more than a shameless excuse.

"What were the orders I gave you?" Zhao Feng asked, cutting straight to the point.

"You left Wei City, and we couldn't contact you for a long time. Naturally, we assumed you had fled the battle," Zhao Tuo continued, refusing to give up.

"You still want to argue, even now." Zhao Feng shook his head, slightly disappointed. "It seems I overestimated you."

So this was the historical Zhao Tuo.

"Mr. Kuai."

"Have the charges against Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo been written down?" Zhao Feng turned to look at Kuai Pu.

"They have all been recorded. They will be submitted to the Shangjiangjun along with the battle report of your great victory over the Wei Army," Kuai Pu promptly responded.

"Please have Mr. Kuai read them aloud for all to hear. I want to see how they will argue against them now," Zhao Feng commanded in a heavy tone.

Kuai Pu nodded, holding a set of bamboo slips. He walked before Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo and, amidst their anxious and panicked gazes, read aloud, "General Zhao Feng, by royal decree, defended Wei City. The Wei Army launched fierce attacks for days. After twenty days of defense, with all soldiers and officers united as one, Wei City was kept secure."

"However, during this time, Wanjiang Chen Tao and Wanjiang Zhao Tuo disobeyed orders. They did not defend the city but instead abandoned it and fled."

"The crimes of Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo are as follows: First, disobeying a direct command. Second, deserting their posts, thereby abandoning Qin territory and their Pao Ze."

"For these two crimes, the Military Judge has already determined their guilt," Kuai Pu announced loudly.

As his words fell, the faces of Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo turned deathly pale. If Zhao Feng had dealt with them himself, it would have been a matter of military regulation. But the case had now gone to the Military Judge and would be reported up the chain of command to the Shangjiangjun, Wang Jian. It might even be presented directly before the King of Xianyang himself.

This meant the two of them were already convicted.

At that moment, Zhao Tuo could no longer contain himself. He struggled to his feet and pointed at Zhao Feng, cursing, "Zhao Feng, you despicable villain! You deliberately suppressed us, preventing us from gaining merit on the battlefield! Even if I am convicted, I will report your despicable shamelessness! I will report your favoritism towards your own followers!"

Zhao Feng did not respond. He simply waved his hand.

Two trusted aides showed no mercy. One strode forward and slapped Zhao Tuo across the face.

CRACK!

The blow left Zhao Tuo stunned. The other aide delivered a swift kick, knocking him to the ground again.

"Report me if you wish, but as of now, there is no longer a place for you under my command."

"As for your claim that I suppressed you, go ahead and report it. The Great King granted me full authority over the forces in Wei City. Do you think I need to arrange deployments according to your wishes?" Zhao Feng let out a cold laugh, not bothering to refute their words.

He had indeed suppressed them deliberately, but so what? The confrontation between them and him was no different from a battle on the field: the victor becomes king, the loser a bandit. If Zhao Feng had not turned the tide of battle, if Wei City had been lost because it lacked their troops, then Zhao Feng would have been guilty of a grave offense.

Since they had chosen to fight him to the death, how could he not utterly crush them?

"From this day forth, Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo are stripped of their ranks of Wanjiang!"

"Their two Wanjiang regiments are hereby transferred to my direct command!"

"Men!"

"Throw Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo into the dungeons! Without my order, no one is permitted to visit them," Zhao Feng commanded loudly.

Within the army, this was a final judgment passed upon the two. The actual punishment, of course, would be decided after the report was sent up. As for how the Shao fu would handle it, that was all up to the higher-ups. If the matter reached the King of Qin directly, the punishment would be anything but light. Affecting the outcome of a battle was sure to enrage the king.

"Yes, General!" the trusted aides immediately responded.

They then seized the two men and began to drag them out of the hall. Chen Tao's face was ashen, completely devoid of spirit. Zhao Tuo, however, was still struggling and shouting, "Zhao Feng, don't you get smug! I won't let you get away with this..."

Amidst his furious curses, Zhao Tuo's voice grew more and more distant.

From beginning to end, Zhao Feng had never taken him seriously.

Watching Zhao Tuo and Chen Tao being led away, the other generals showed expressions of pure satisfaction.

"Well punished," Tu Sui said indignantly. "Those two deserved a severe punishment. We fought the Wei Army to the death while they took their troops and abandoned Wei City. If we hadn't been able to hold the city, they would have gotten all of us killed."

If it were up to his temper, he would have loved to execute the two of them on the spot.

"Exactly," another general agreed. "I hope the higher-ups punish them even more severely."

"To abandon the city and retreat for their own selfish gains."

"It's a disgrace to be in the same army as them," the other generals chimed in, fully agreeing with Zhao Feng's decision.

"However," Zhao Feng spoke up, a thoughtful look on his face, "with these additional twenty thousand soldiers, I can now proceed with the next phase of my strategy."

"General, does this mean you intend to continue the attack?" Tu Sui immediately grasped the implication in Zhao Feng's words, his eyes lighting up.

The rest of the generals stared at Zhao Feng, utterly astonished.

"I said back when the Wei Army first attacked that defense was never my objective."