

Longevity 201

Chapter 201: Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Great Elation! (3)

"Huai Xiang had absolutely no intention of targeting General Zhao Feng, nor is this matter related to any spies. This must be Zhao Tuo, acting for his own selfish interests by targeting General Zhao Feng," Wang Wan immediately argued on Huai Zhuang's behalf.

After he stood out, Huai Zhuang immediately understood and bowed. "What Chancellor Wang said is exactly what this servant believes. It is all because of that Zhao Tuo. This old servant did not realize how treacherous this person was. I implore the Great King to mete out punishment."

Clearly, this was a clever move. After hearing Huai Zhuang's words, Ying Zheng gave him a deep look and said no more.

"Tingwei," Ying Zheng said solemnly. "According to Qin Law, how should Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo be dealt with?"

"For disrespecting a superior officer's command, the most severe penalty is one hundred lashes, demotion in military rank, and reduction of noble title," Li Si immediately replied. "Mobilizing troops without authorization and nearly bringing Wei City to the brink of ruin is a grave crime. They should be stripped of all military positions and noble titles, then sent to the Xianyang Proclamation Prison for severe punishment."

These two sentences condemned Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo to a fate beyond redemption. Even if they were not executed, their ultimate end would be lifelong imprisonment or slavery. This was the price for opposing Zhao Feng.

When they led their troops away, they deprived Wei City of twenty thousand fresh soldiers, a critical loss. If Wei City had fallen, not only would Zhao Feng have been guilty of a major crime, but his isolated army would have faced the risk of annihilation. This was precisely why Zhao Feng had Kuai Pu report the matter alone; he wanted nothing less than to ensure the ruin of Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo.

This was Zhao Feng's nature. Even if you were not one of his trusted confidants, it was enough to simply obey his orders. But since these men had harbored the intent to bring about his doom, Zhao Feng would not let them off easily. For anyone who wanted to take his life, Zhao Feng would repay them in kind, no matter the cost. An eye for an eye was his way.

"Follow the Tingwei's counsel," Ying Zheng commanded coldly. "Draft the decree. Strip Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo of all military positions and noble titles. Escort them immediately to the Xianyang Proclamation Prison for trial."

"This servant receives the decree," Li Si accepted joyfully.

The fate of the two men was sealed.

"Huai Xiang," Ying Zheng said, turning to Huai Zhuang with a deep admonition. "This time, I will not hold this against you, but I hope there will not be a next time. Your actions have truly disheartened the loyal soldiers of Qin."

Huai Zhuang was shaken to his core. With no words to offer in defense, he simply bowed. "Thank you, Great King, for your magnanimous grace."

If Wei City had fallen and Zhao Feng had been defeated, he would have seized the opportunity to kick him while he was down. But ultimately, things had not gone according to his wishes.

"For Zhao Feng's achievements in decisively defeating Wei Wuji, he certainly deserves a great reward," Ying Zheng said, a smile on his face, his satisfaction with Zhao Feng unconcealed. "When Zhao Feng was defending Wei City, I promised him that if he could hold it, I would promote him to Main General. But the surprise he has given me is far too great. This reward should be granted ahead of schedule."

"The Great King is sagacious!" Han Fei immediately seconded. "General Zhao has performed such great service for Qin; he deserves to be rewarded. He is absolutely capable of holding the position of Main General."

"Draft the decree," Ying Zheng declared with a commanding voice. "For defeating the enemy and resolving the nation's crisis, Zhao Feng is granted a promotion of one rank to become the Main General of Qin, with command over one hundred thousand troops. Furthermore, he is to be awarded one thousand pieces of gold, fifty thousand coins, one hundred servants, one hundred jade articles, one thousand bolts of fine cloth, and fifty guards."

"The Great King is sagacious!" the full civil and military court shouted in unison.

"Great King," Yu Liao suddenly stepped forward, taking a roll of silk fabric from his robes. "General Zhao's great victory over the enemy was not achieved by his strength alone, but was the fruit of a bloody struggle by one hundred thousand soldiers. Before the great battle, General Zhao made a request. Now is the time for this servant to present it. I ask that the Great King grant General Zhao's request, which is also my own."

"Zhao Feng made a request?" Ying Zheng asked, puzzled. "Why was I not aware of this?"

"This was presented by the Shangjiangjun on General Zhao Feng's behalf. This servant simply felt the timing was not right before, but now the time has come," Yu Liao said, holding the silk fabric up high. "Please, Great King, review it."

"Since all the ministers are present, Yu Qing, you may read it aloud. I wish to hear what Zhao Feng has requested," Ying Zheng gestured.

"This servant receives the decree," Yu Liao replied without hesitation. He unfolded the silk fabric and read aloud, "This servant, Zhao Feng, makes a request of the Great King. I defended Wei City with one hundred thousand troops. In terms of strength, our truly battle-ready elites numbered just over thirty thousand; aside from new recruits, the rest were fifty thousand surrendered soldiers. If we had fought conventionally, our army would surely have been routed, and Wei City would have been impossible to defend. Therefore, as commander, I declared to the Penal Battalion that any who fight for Qin and die in battle shall have their families receive the same compensation as the families of regular Qin soldiers. This request is one I make on behalf of the heroic souls who have fallen for our nation."

Upon hearing this, Ying Zheng was visibly moved. "The Penal Battalion fought for Qin. If they died for Qin, their families rightfully deserve compensation," he said, agreeing at once without any deliberation. "I approve Zhao Feng's request."

"The Great King is sagacious!" Yu Liao said immediately. "If General Zhao Feng learns that the Great King has approved this, he will be overjoyed."

"Apart from Zhao Feng's rewards," Ying Zheng announced, "all the soldiers who defended Wei City shall also be rewarded. Issue my edict: all soldiers who defended Wei City shall be rewarded according to military merit. The specific arrangements are to be decided between Zhao Feng and his Military Judge."

"This servant receives the decree," Yu Liao instantly responded.

After giving his instructions, Ying Zheng scanned the court. "Do any of you have further memorials to present?"

"We have no further memorials," the officials of the full court replied.

Zhao Feng's victory today had caught many in the court off guard. Naturally, many who had originally planned to present memorials had lost their spirit for it.

"Court is dismissed."