

Longevity 202

Chapter 202: Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Great Elation! (4)

Ying Zheng said no more and immediately dismissed the court.

"Your servants bid farewell to the Great King," the ministers shouted in unison.

「Within Zhangtai Palace」

"Bring me a pot of wine," Ying Zheng commanded after he sat down, a joyous smile on his face. "Today, I shall enjoy a modest drink."

"Great King, since you wish for a modest drink, shall this servant summon the concubines to accompany you?" Zhao Gao asked immediately with a respectful smile.

"My modest drink is not for pleasure," Ying Zheng shook his head.

"Given the good news the Great King received today, will you be visiting Mrs. Hu tonight? Perhaps it is a blessing from the heavens; today also happens to be the Eighteenth Prince's tenth birthday," Zhao Gao said respectfully.

"Today is Hai'er's birthday? I had actually forgotten," Ying Zheng said, as if just remembering.

"Now that our Great Qin is at war and the Great King is burdened with state affairs, it is only natural to forget," Zhao Gao said with a placating smile.

"Prepare a birthday gift for me. I will visit Mrs. Hu's palace tonight and celebrate Hai'er's birthday," Ying Zheng said slowly.

"This servant will prepare it immediately," Zhao Gao nodded promptly. Then, with a deep bow, he slowly departed from Zhangtai Palace.

「In Mrs. Hu's Palace」

"The Central Chariot Commandant has arrived!" a temple official called out.

Inside the palace, an exceedingly beautiful and charming woman immediately stood up when she heard the announcement. Next to her was a ten-year-old child.

"Hai'er, get up quickly. Your teacher has arrived," Mrs. Hu called out immediately.

"Yes."

Hu Hai stood up, looking somewhat bewilderedly toward the entrance of the hall. A moment later, Zhao Gao walked in briskly.

"Mister Zhao, you've come," Mrs. Hu greeted him with a welcoming smile. She obviously relied on him a great deal.

"Madam, there is no need for such courtesy. This servant is merely a subordinate," Zhao Gao said, feigning alarm as he saw her rise to greet him.

"Mister Zhao, you are the one being too modest," Mrs. Hu said in an ingratiating tone. "You are Hai'er's teacher, which makes you like family to me." She then looked toward Hu Hai. "Hai'er, have you not greeted your teacher yet?"

"I pay my respects to my teacher," Hu Hai bowed very respectfully to Zhao Gao.

Seeing the respectful attitude of the mother and son, Zhao Gao was very pleased. He, who rarely smiled, now had a grin on his face. He stepped forward and helped Hu Hai up. "My Prince, please rise."

"Thank you, Teacher," Hu Hai replied with a respectful expression.

Zhao Gao smiled at Mrs. Hu. "Madam, do you know why this servant has come?"

"Is the Great King coming tonight?" Mrs. Hu asked expectantly.

"This servant mentioned to the Great King that today is Prince Hu Hai's birthday. The Great King had a birthday gift prepared, and what's more, he will personally visit you tonight," Zhao Gao said with a smile.

"It seems it took your word for it, Mister Zhao," Mrs. Hu said with a hint of resentment. "Lately, the Great King has been so busy with state affairs that he has only visited Mrs. Mi a few times and has not come to my palace at all.

"If it weren't for you, Mister Zhao, I don't know how much longer I would have had to wait."

"Madam, perhaps today was just a stroke of luck," Zhao Gao said with a laugh. "A general won a great victory, and the Great King was in high spirits, even saying he wanted a small drink.

"That's why this servant dared to mention it."

"So that's how it is," Mrs. Hu nodded, suddenly understanding.

Zhao Gao began, "Speaking of which..." but he trailed off, his eyes sweeping over the servants in the palace.

"You may all leave us. Close the doors," Mrs. Hu said, immediately grasping his intention.

"As you wish."

More than a dozen servants bowed and exited, closing the doors behind them.

Once they were alone, Zhao Gao continued, "Regarding this great victory, I must remind you, Madam, that if this opportunity is seized, it could help the Prince in the future."

"Please elaborate, Mister Zhao. What opportunity?" Mrs. Hu pressed immediately.

"Have you heard of Zhao Feng, Madam?" Zhao Gao asked.

"I... have not," Mrs. Hu replied, shaking her head. "Although I have my own maternal clan, it is nothing compared to Mrs. Mi's."

"Zhao Feng. He was the youngest Deputy General in Qin... no, he should be a Main General by now," Zhao Gao said gravely. "He is highly regarded by the Great King.

"His future potential is boundless. He may even become the next Shangjiangjun."

"Mister Zhao, are you suggesting I send people to win over this Zhao Feng?" Mrs. Hu asked, her face full of worry. "But can he be won over?"

"Since you already know, that wretch Mrs. Mi must know as well. And with Wang Wan and the others supporting Fusu, I'm afraid they already have the advantage."

"You need not worry, Madam," Zhao Gao said, before explaining the situation at court. "Zhao Feng holds a grudge against Wang Wan and the others. He is destined never to work for them."

Once she understood, Mrs. Hu immediately grasped the situation. "It appears Fusu and his faction have already tried to win him over, but they failed and even came to resent him, which is why they're trying so hard to suppress him."

"Exactly," Zhao Gao sneered sinisterly. "Fusu is already Zhao Feng's enemy. Zhao Feng is a smart man. He must know that if Fusu takes the throne, his own days will be numbered."

"So, aside from Hu Hai, Zhao Feng has no other choice," Mrs. Hu instantly understood. "If he doesn't want to face retribution from Fusu later, he must help Hu Hai."

"The Great King holds Zhao Feng in unprecedented esteem," Zhao Gao sneered, as if he had already planned everything. "As long as you can gain his support, the Prince will command military power that Fusu lacks. When that happens, who can say what the future holds?"

"Thank goodness you're here. Otherwise, I would have missed this golden opportunity," Mrs. Hu said, nodding repeatedly.

Meanwhile, young Hu Hai understood none of their conversation. He simply squatted on the floor, playing with his shoes, the very picture of innocence.

「Elsewhere, at the Eldest Imperial Son's Mansion」

Fusu looked at Wang Wan and Chunyu Yue with a puzzled expression. "Teacher. Chancellor Wang. I don't understand why you are targeting Zhao Feng like this. Aren't you just making him our enemy? Father values him greatly, yet we're suppressing him. This can't be good."

Hearing this, Wang Wan shot a reproachful glance at Chunyu Yue. He was the one who had started this whole affair. If Chunyu Yue hadn't acted on his own, they wouldn't be in this situation.

"My Prince," Chunyu Yue admitted, "it is my fault. That day, because of the matter concerning the Royal Daughter, I sent Men Jia to see Zhao Feng. But that man showed you no respect whatsoever! He even severely injured Men Jia." As he spoke of the incident, his face filled with rage.

Fusu's brow furrowed. His nature was inherently benevolent, and hearing his teacher's words, he immediately grasped the crux of the problem.

"Why did you send Men Jia to find Zhao Feng, Teacher?" Fusu questioned with a deep frown. "Did you... threaten him?"

Chunyu Yue replied frankly, "It wasn't a threat, merely some counsel. But that Zhao Feng was simply ungrateful."