

## Longevity 21

### Chapter 21: Wang Yan: I Can't Fulfill This Request

「Outside the Wounded Soldier Camp!」

Wang Yan sat by a campfire where a sheep was being roasted. Around her, personal guards had formed a protective perimeter.

Just then, Zhao Feng emerged from the Wounded Soldier Camp. Seeing the scene outside, he immediately called out, "Who is Junhou Captain Wang Yan?"

A personal guard approached, glanced at Zhao Feng, and asked, "Are you Zhao Feng?"

"Yes," Zhao Feng nodded.

"Please follow me," the guard said, leading the way.

Only a commander has the authority to command personal guards. Could this Junhou Captain be that same young woman I saw once in Yang City? Zhao Feng wondered, observing the imposing guards. After all, his impression of them was exceptionally strong.

Guided by the guard, Zhao Feng arrived at the campfire.

I knew it. It's her, he thought, recognizing her instantly. Anyone can see she's a woman disguised as a man.

And why was it so obvious? Although the young woman before him wore her hair up like the other soldiers, her fair complexion and petite build were dead giveaways. A closer look would reveal she lacked an Adam's apple.

As Zhao Feng approached, the guard beside her bowed. "Junhou Captain, I've brought the man."

Wang Yan immediately stood and turned. When she saw Zhao Feng, a look of astonishment flashed across her face, as if she were startled by his appearance. Perhaps she had misjudged his age and looks.

How can he be so young? Wang Yan thought to herself. During the battle the day before, Zhao Feng had been so covered in blood that his face was completely obscured.

"Are you Zhao Feng?" Wang Yan asked tentatively.

"Yes." Zhao Feng nodded, then cupped his fist and said, "May I ask what business the Junhou Captain has with me?"

"All of you, stand down," Wang Yan waved her hand at the guards beside her.

"Yes, Captain," the personal guards replied, dispersing in unison.

Once they were alone, Wang Yan offered a slight smile and bowed deeply to Zhao Feng. "I came to thank you for saving my life. If you hadn't acted yesterday, I might have died under an enemy's spear."

I acted? Zhao Feng was taken aback, his mind flashing back to the battle. He recalled saving someone in passing while he was killing Bao Yuan, but he hadn't paid it much attention. After all, he had saved quite a few people that day.

"We are comrades in arms. Killing the enemy was just something I did along the way. You don't need to be so formal, Junhou Captain," Zhao Feng said calmly.

Hearing this and seeing his composed demeanor, Wang Yan was even more surprised. In her mind, any ordinary person who knew they had saved her and earned her gratitude would at least show a hint of joy, even if they tried to remain calm. After all, Zhao Feng was merely from the Logistics Army, while she was a Junhou Captain of the main camp—the gap in their status was immense.

"It may have been a simple act for you, but for me, you saved my life," she insisted. "I owe you. Name your price, and I will grant you one request within my power."

"I don't want anything," Zhao Feng said, shaking his head.

"Money? Power? You can ask for either," Wang Yan pressed, unwilling to give up. She had sought him out specifically to repay this debt. As the daughter of Wang Jian, a Senior General of Great Qin, she had been raised on the principles of repaying every kindness and serving the state with loyalty. How would others see her if she failed to settle such a debt?

"I have no great need for money; my annual salary is enough for my family to live on," Zhao Feng replied, still perfectly calm. "As for power, it would be useless to me. Besides, for killing Bao Yuan, the reward I'll receive under the merit system will already be significant." He shook his head again.

At this, Wang Yan grew a little anxious. The Zhao Feng before her looked very young, around her own age, yet he possessed a maturity that didn't seem to belong to someone his age.

"Do you truly desire nothing at all?" she asked, still holding out hope.

"Well, if we're talking about something I want, there is one thing," Zhao Feng said with a sudden smile. "But can you do it?"

"Tell me," Wang Yan urged immediately.

"I want to be discharged from service and return home." Zhao Feng said it plainly, his eyes filled with anticipation. If she could make that happen, he would be eternally grateful to her.

Compared to winning fame and power in the army, Zhao Feng's greatest wish was to care for his mother.

Of course, with his current strength, by following the great tide of Qin's unification of the realm, he had a real chance of reaching the pinnacle of authority. But Zhao Feng also knew what the future held. He knew about Emperor Qin Shi Huang's demise, Hu Hai's succession, and the fall of the Qin Dynasty under

Qin Er Shi, the Second Emperor. It all seemed distant, but it was only about twenty years away. The destiny of Qin was limited. If he wished, Zhao Feng could easily carve out his own empire during the chaos at the End of Qin.

But the real reason he wasn't attached to military power was his mother's poor health. He and his sister were fraternal twins, and their mother's health had been frail and plagued by illness ever since giving birth to them. Zhao Feng wanted to fulfill his duties as a son and attend to her side. In that era, childbirth was like having one foot in the grave, and delivering twins was even more perilous. Zhao Feng did not want to become a son who longed to care for his parent only after she was gone.

"What?" Wang Yan stared at him in disbelief. "You want to be discharged and go home?"

"That's right," Zhao Feng nodded.

"Do you have any idea what you're saying? In this one battle, you killed nearly three hundred enemy soldiers—that alone is a colossal military achievement. On top of that, you killed Bao Yuan, which is a merit on top of merits. Our Logistics Army's supply lines were saved from Bao Yuan's surprise attack largely thanks to you. With these accomplishments, you could be promoted several ranks and have your nobility raised by several levels. Your future is boundless. And you're telling me you want to be discharged?" she asked, astonished.

Faced with her shock, Zhao Feng remained serene. Perhaps to others, wanting to leave the army after such accomplishments would make him seem like a madman, but he simply couldn't care less.

"Indeed," he replied.

Seeing that Zhao Feng was not joking, Wang Yan was stunned into silence, unsure of what to say.

Noticing the lamb roasting over the fire, Zhao Feng didn't stand on ceremony. "Is this lamb being roasted for me?"

Wang Yan didn't answer, merely staring at him with a strange expression, as if his words made her question her own sanity.

Zhao Feng made himself comfortable, sitting down by the fire and taking out a small knife to slice off a piece of meat.

Finally, Wang Yan spoke. "The Qin military service system mandates a basic two-year term of service, and a five-year term for Sharp Warriors. No one is permitted to alter these terms or grant a soldier an early discharge. To do so is to face severe punishment under the Qin Laws. You're right. That is a condition I cannot meet."