

Longevity 219

Chapter 219: Zhao Feng Strikes! Shockwaves Through Qin and Zhao!

"What news has you in such a panic?" Lian Po asked the messenger sternly as he saw the fear in his eyes.

"Jinyang has closed its gates, not even allowing me to enter and report," the messenger said. "I made it clear that the Senior General was being pursued by the Qin Army. However, General Yan Ju, who is guarding the city, said that the Senior General had already written his final letter. The Great King hopes that the Senior General will fight the Qin Army to the bitter end, down to the very last soldier."

"Now, all of Zhao knows of the Senior General's brave confrontation with Qin. The people of Zhao regard Qin as the enemy. If the Senior General returns, it won't bode well for Zhao... So... so..." The messenger continued, his voice filled with trepidation, but he bowed his head, clearly afraid to say more.

Upon hearing this, a bitter smile appeared on Lian Po's aged face, which was then followed by a burst of laughter. "HAHAHA."

"HAHAHA..."

Lian Po's laughter echoed throughout the entire camp, but the sorrow within it was audible to all the surrounding generals.

"Senior General." The Zhao generals looked at Lian Po with sadness in their eyes. At that moment, they felt the same way he did, for they had all been abandoned by the Zhao state.

Lian Po's final letter had shaken the court and, aided by "those with ulterior motives," spread across all of Zhao. It filled the entire state with hatred for Qin, spurring their fighting spirit.

And so, Lian Po had to die.

If he lived and returned, what would become of his final letter? The inspiration he had provided would become a joke.

Of course, these were only some of the reasons. Most crucially, Zhao Yan did not wish for Lian Po to live. To an outside observer, Lian Po alone was worth a thousand armies—an invaluable general for any nation. But Zhao Yan did not think so. Even with Zhao's dire situation, his thoughts were set on eliminating his rivals, and Lian Po was the rival he feared most.

"My life should have been forfeit for my country back during the Battle of Changping. Having clung to a meager existence for decades, it seems my time has come at last."

"The final letter has been left. Indeed, I have no face to keep living," Lian Po said, laughing bitterly.

But looking at the generals who had followed him all this time, Lian Po's eyes also showed shame. "I have wronged you all by involving you in this. If you hadn't been so close to me, you wouldn't be facing this predicament."

"The Qin Army is formidable, and we have no path of retreat."

"I won't insist that you sacrifice your lives for the country. After all, this nation might truly be beyond saving. If any of you wish to leave, I won't stop you."

Hearing this, about a dozen Zhao generals knelt beside Lian Po.

"Senior General!"

"I have fought by your side for over a decade. My life has long been yours," one general declared.

"Since the Senior General is prepared to meet his end bravely, how could I possibly desert my post?"

"I will fight alongside the Senior General against the Qin Army until I die."

"I vow to follow the Senior General to the death, with no regrets!" the other generals cried out, each one filled with the resolve to die in battle.

Seeing so many kneeling commanders before him, a smile crossed Lian Po's face, yet it was tinged more with remorse than anything else.

"Even though we are enemies of Qin, if you were in Qin, perhaps you would not have ended up in this situation today."

"If Lord Chunping had inherited the throne, our Zhao might have stood a chance against Qin, perhaps even unified the land. But now, it's too late," Lian Po said, smiling wistfully.

In his heart, his greatest hope for the succession had been Zhao Yi, but the throne had ultimately been seized by Zhao Yan. Everything was too late. At this point, Lian Po even felt a pang of regret. When Zhao Yan used his schemes to usurp the throne, he should have raised an army to help Zhao Yi claim it. Then, perhaps, they would not have ended up like this.

But now, it was just a fleeting thought.

"The Qin Army is no more than ten miles away from us. Continue retreating towards Jinyang City," Lian Po commanded in a grave tone.

"Senior General," the Deputy General asked, his voice filled with a mixture of confusion and anger, "Jinyang City will not open its gates to us, so why are we heading there?"

"The Qin Army has broken through Quyang and is catching up. Jinyang City will be their next target. What impact will our presence have on the Qin Army if we are stationed to the east of Jinyang City?" Lian Po asked calmly.

The Zhao generals pondered for a moment, then understood.

"If our army is stationed to the east of Jinyang, the Qin Army will be wary of us and will not dare to attack."

"We just have to wait for the Qin Army to attack Jinyang, and then we can ambush them from the flank, preventing them from taking the city." A general quickly grasped the plan.

"In this battle, whether we win or lose, I will surely die. The Great King won't spare me. But you..."

Lian Po looked at his commanders with the eyes of a comrade-in-arms. "You are the War Generals who have followed me for years. I see you as my juniors, and even more so, as my brothers. I cannot lead you to your deaths. Stationing ourselves near Jinyang to deter the Qin Army—this is your one chance at survival."

Upon hearing his words, many of the Zhao generals looked at Lian Po, their expressions moved.

"Senior General."

"We are willing to follow the Senior General to the death!" one general pledged.

"We do not fear death!" all the Zhao generals shouted in reply.

"That's enough," Lian Po said with a wave of his hand, saying no more. "No need for further words. Order the march. We will station ourselves to the east of Jinyang and deter the Qin Army. This is the last thing I can do for Zhao."

"We obey your command!" the Zhao generals chorused.

「At the Qin Camp!」

"Senior General."