

Longevity 22

Chapter 22: Everything Is for Survival! No One Is Wrong!

"It's nothing." Zhao Feng smiled, seemingly unconcerned. "I've been in the military for half a year. According to the two-year service limit, I can go home in another year and a half."

He had asked Wang Yan somewhat playfully; if he could really go home early, that would be wonderful, but there was nothing to be done if he couldn't. He couldn't just desert, after all. The punishment was severe—he would be sentenced to hard labor.

Wang Yan asked, a puzzled look on her face, "With your skills and strength, you should have been assigned as a Sharp Warrior from the start. Why were you placed in the Logistics Army?"

"What skills do I have? They were just forced out of me in the struggle to survive," Zhao Feng chuckled.

Of course, he had intentionally hidden his skills back in the recruit camp.

Hearing Zhao Feng's response, Wang Yan couldn't help but roll her eyes. If he had killed a few enemies, it might have been out of compulsion, but killing nearly three hundred enemy soldiers and charging into their ranks to slay Bao Yuan—was that still just being forced?

"Don't you want to make a name for yourself?" Wang Yan couldn't help asking. "With your strength, you could definitely hold a high position in the future."

She truly couldn't understand what Zhao Feng was thinking. He had the ability to achieve great things, yet he had no interest in doing so.

Zhao Feng didn't answer. Instead, he ate the roasted mutton.

After enlisting, Zhao Feng hadn't had meat for a long time. Although Qin treated its military well, that treatment was reserved for the true Sharp Warriors. The meals for the Logistics Army were just enough to ensure they didn't starve. King Zheng of Qin greatly valued the Sharp Warriors who fought for him, but he didn't care as much for the Logistics Army, who weren't required to charge into battle.

In modern terms, the Sharp Warriors were the regular army, while the Logistics Army was more of a motley crew.

After eating a few pieces of meat, Zhao Feng took a satisfying sip of the wine Master Chen had given him.

Then, he looked at Wang Yan and said, "Rather than making a name for myself, I'd rather stay alive."

Wang Yan frowned. "As a man of Qin, shouldn't your duty be to expand our territory and show loyalty to your ruler and country?"

To this, Zhao Feng just gave a faint smile. "Loyalty to the ruler and country, perhaps! If an enemy invaded my homeland, I would take up my weapon and fight them to the death!"

"But expanding the territory? That's a concern for the nobility connected to royal power. The larger Qin's territory grows, the more the nobility gains. Expanding the territory brings them greater benefits, but what does it have to do with us commoners? What do we gain? We gain nothing but the chance to throw our lives away, becoming stepping stones for the profits reaped by the powerful."

"When territory expands, the nobility rejoice with beaming smiles."

"But for the vast majority of ordinary people, all it means in the end is a small death benefit and another tombstone for a family to weep over."

"Heh."

His words made Wang Yan's expression change. They were completely different from the teachings she had received since childhood. In fact, this was the first time Wang Yan had ever encountered the perspective of a commoner. She wanted to argue, but for a moment, she didn't know how to respond.

After a long pause, she stared at Zhao Feng and said, "Qin expands its territory for the good of the world."

"Once the Six States are conquered, there will be no more war, and the people can live and work in peace. Once the world is unified, everyone can live in tranquility. This is the great wish of the Old Qin People, and for this great wish, everyone is willing to die. Don't you understand?"

"That's just what those in power want to believe," Zhao Feng replied.

"The Old Qin People once fought to the death to secure their own foundation and protect their homeland; naturally, they were all willing to die for that cause."

"Of course, your point that a unified Qin could end the wars and bring stability might be valid."

"But for the common people, the best outcome is not having to go to the battlefield to die."

"Not everyone wants to chase fame and fortune; sometimes, we have no choice in the matter."

"Take me, for example. I never wanted to enlist. I was simply conscripted when I came of age."

"If I had a choice, I would fulfill my filial duties first," Zhao Feng said with a faint, helpless smile.

Were it not for his concern for his mother, perhaps Zhao Feng wouldn't have been so resistant. Unifying the land under heaven! In his past life, as a person from the future, he truly admired Emperor Qin Shi Huang for this earth-shattering, unprecedented achievement. Zhao Feng held a great deal of reverence and admiration for Emperor Qin Shi Huang. Because for the future Huaxia, without Emperor Qin Shi Huang's unification, the nation would have fragmented. It would have failed to achieve ethnic and cultural unity.

In short, later generations evaluated Emperor Qin Shi Huang as a singular emperor whose achievements echoed through the ages.

But before the phrase about his enduring achievements, there was another: a sin upon his own time!

Because the people of this era suffered too much.

The infamous name of the Qin Army! Perhaps some of it was slander from people after the end of the Qin dynasty, but a large part of it was because the people truly could not survive. The 'Qin Army' was a name the people themselves cried out in their suffering.

Only by living in this era could one know how difficult it was.

Having been reborn into this era as a citizen of Qin, and even conscripted to serve on the battlefield, Zhao Feng had a profound understanding of its cruelty. Human life was truly worthless. Immersed in the present, Zhao Feng wanted to stay as far away from the battlefield as possible. He had only ended up there because he had no other choice. Even with his current strength, he wasn't sure if he could survive amidst an army of thousands. If that was true for him, what hope did an ordinary soldier have?

This era! It was far too cruel!

Some people might be unwilling to live in obscurity and want to achieve fame, to use military merit to rise into the ranks of the nobility, but that was incredibly difficult. The vast majority were forcibly conscripted and had no choice but to go to war.

Listening to Zhao Feng's words, Wang Yan fell silent again, seemingly at a loss. Their meeting had been brief, lasting no longer than the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, but her heart was filled with an indescribable mix of feelings.

"Judging by your appearance, you must come from a noble family," Zhao Feng said. "You have personal guards for protection, something usually reserved for a Main General. Naturally, you harbor grand ambitions, wanting to expand the territory for the Imperial Court and bring glory to your family."

"From your perspective, there is nothing wrong with that."

"But for me, and for countless soldiers from common backgrounds, our greatest pursuit is not power, but survival. We want to keep our mothers from weeping and fulfill our filial duties to them."

"A single general's success is built on the bones of ten thousand soldiers."

"For a commoner, it's about being able to avoid starvation and provide for one's family."

"For a conscripted soldier, it's about not dying on the battlefield."

"This is what I, a commoner, want. And perhaps it's what countless other commoners want, too."

"To summarize," Zhao Feng said with a wistful smile, "there is nothing wrong with a sovereign wanting to unify the world and achieve a victory never before seen. There is nothing wrong with nobles and ministers wanting to expand the territory and serve the state. But for a commoner, for a soldier, to want to survive, to fulfill their filial duty to their mother—there is nothing wrong with that, either."

Listening to his words, Wang Yan's gaze grew complex, as if she was beginning to understand.

Zhao Feng said no more, quietly eating the meat roasting over the campfire.

After eating his fill, he slowly stood up and looked at Wang Yan with a deep, meaningful gaze.