

Longevity 23

Chapter 23: Wang Jian's Shock

"Noble families may be keen on expanding their territory, but as a woman, you should avoid the battlefield whenever possible. This is not a place to prove your value," Zhao Feng said to Wang Yan, then turned and walked towards the Wounded Soldier Camp.

That remark sent a jolt through Wang Yan's body. Her eyes widened as she stared fixedly at Zhao Feng's retreating figure. It wasn't until he had left that she came back to her senses, a hint of surprise on her face. After quite a while, she murmured to herself. He actually realized I'm a woman. It seems he also guessed why I went to the battlefield. As a woman, I don't want to be here either. But if I don't go to the battlefield, earn merit, and change my circumstances... even as the daughter of a great Qin Shangjiangjun, even with my noble status, I'll never escape the fate of an arranged marriage. I refuse to be a sacrificial pawn in a political marriage. I want to be in charge of my own life.

The deepest secret hidden in Wang Yan's heart was spoken aloud, but Zhao Feng did not hear it. In a noble family, a son might be destined for honor, but a daughter will inevitably become a sacrifice in a marital alliance. At that moment, Zhao Feng's words stirred ripples in her heart. The gratitude for saving her life, combined with their heart-to-heart talk today, gave her a feeling she had never experienced before.

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「At the Qin-Han border!」

Wang Jian's brows were furrowed as he stood before a map. As the tent flap was thrown open, Wang Ben rushed in with a smile on his face.

"How did it go?" Wang Jian asked immediately.

"Father, the crisis has been resolved," Wang Ben said, sounding greatly relieved.

"How was it resolved? Did Li Teng call for reinforcements? But that would have been too late," Wang Jian said gravely.

He had learned the previous night about the surprise attack by Han forces hidden in Yang City. Upon learning of the situation, Wang Jian had immediately halted the transport of supplies and summoned the soldiers from the main camp in response. As a famous Shangjiangjun of Qin, and the one in charge of the first step in the campaign to annihilate Han, Wang Jian certainly had capabilities far beyond those of Bao Yuan. It could be said that even if Bao Yuan's forces had truly broken through the vicinity of Yang City, he would not have been able to cut off the Qin Army's supply lines. Wang Jian would not have sat idly by and awaited his doom.

"Father, the report of this battle is almost unbelievable," Wang Ben said, not elaborating further. "I don't know all the details myself. Please look at the military report submitted by Yan'er first." He immediately presented a set of bamboo slips to Wang Jian.

Wang Jian's expression became animated as he took the military report. When he understood the cause and effect, a smile appeared on his face. "So, you're saying these eight thousand Han soldiers have now been completely annihilated? And the reason they didn't break out of the Yang City area to attack our army's supply line is that they were held back by our Logistics Army, giving Yan'er the opportunity to catch up and destroy them?"

"Exactly so. This Logistics Army has rendered a great service," Wang Ben replied. "However, of the ten thousand soldiers in the Logistics Army, only just over six hundred survived," he added with a hint of sorrow.

"Reward this Logistics Army generously," Wang Jian said in a deep voice. "They used their fierce and fearless bloodlust to prove that besides our main battle Sharp Warriors, our Logistics Army is also composed of brave men. I will petition the Great King. All families of the Logistics Army soldiers who died in this battle will receive thirty percent more compensation than the standard. It is what they deserve for their valorous combat."

"Father is wise," Wang Ben immediately agreed.

Wang Jian nodded and continued to read the battle report. However, after reading about the Logistics Army holding back the Han forces, his expression became even more peculiar as he continued. He suddenly stood up, snapping the bamboo slips shut. Then, as if in disbelief, he opened them again, his face a mask of shock and bewilderment.

"Father, what is it?" Wang Ben asked in surprise. He hadn't reviewed the military report himself; he only knew that the surprise Han attack had been crushed.

"One man killed nearly three hundred Han soldiers," Wang Jian said slowly, his face still etched with shock. "And he personally slew Bao Yuan amidst the chaos of battle."

"What?" Wang Ben's expression changed, mirroring his father's shock. "One person killed three hundred Han soldiers and also killed Bao Yuan?"

"See for yourself." Wang Jian handed the military report to his son.

Wang Ben took it with both hands and read it carefully, his expression becoming very complex.

"Such fighting strength... is this man even human?" he remarked with deep emotion. "And... he's from the Logistics Army. That level of prowess would be unmatched even among the Sharp Warriors in the main camp."

"And that name, doesn't it sound familiar?" Wang Jian said with a smile.

"Zhao Feng!" Wang Ben immediately read the name aloud. "That day when Bao Yuan's son, Bao Qiu, played dead at the border, he was also killed by this man. For him alone to kill both Bao Yuan and his son... that is quite a fated connection," Wang Jian said with a hint of amusement.

"Father, why would such a valiant man be in the Logistics Army?" Wang Ben's focus returned to this point. "And can there really be someone with such prowess in the world?"

As the current Shangjiangjun, holding high rank and power, Wang Jian was naturally more composed. "The world is vast; there is no shortage of talented and extraordinary individuals. Being assigned to the Logistics Army simply means he didn't perform well as a new recruit and thus wasn't placed among the main battle Sharp Warriors. Perhaps he was concealing his abilities, or his physical strength was lacking at the time. That was his personal choice," Wang Jian explained slowly.

"Father, this man played a pivotal role in turning the tide for our army, allowing us to avoid the Han army's surprise attack. If not for his courageous charge, no one in the Logistics Army would have dared

to confront the Han soldiers. Furthermore, he killed nearly three hundred of the enemy and slew Bao Yuan. This merit is immense," Wang Ben said, his voice full of emotion.

"According to the military merits of Qin, how many ranks should he be promoted?" Wang Jian asked.

"Reporting to Father," Wang Ben replied truthfully, "for his feat of killing the enemy, he can be promoted two ranks. For slaying the Han Senior General Bao Yuan, he can be promoted three ranks. If he is to be granted a noble title, then the promotion in official rank would be reduced."

Within the Great Qin Court, killing enemies and rendering meritorious service led to promotions in rank and ennoblement. But promotion was one aspect, and gaining a title was another. An official rank represented power and the number of soldiers one could command. A noble title represented one's annual salary; the higher the title, the greater the salary and the more land one owned.

"The merit of slaying Bao Yuan must be reported to the Great King. This man's reward should come from the Great King himself," Wang Jian said gravely. "When Bao Yuan's head arrives, I will personally write a memorial to the Great King."

"A man of such valor cannot remain relegated to the Logistics Army. I propose transferring him to the main battle camp to kill enemies for the state," Wang Ben suggested directly.

Wang Jian had no objections to this proposal and nodded immediately. How could such a talented and valiant man remain in the Logistics Army?