

Longevity 242

Chapter 242: The Qin War God Strikes Again!_4

Is there really no other way but to withdraw our troops from Yan? Can't we seek aid from Qi and the Chu State?

Even now, Zhao Yan still harbored a glimmer of hope.

"Great King," said Zhao Yi, stepping forward. "Have you still not come to understand the situation? Our attack on Yan was without just cause. With our main army yet to withdraw, how could Qi and the Chu State possibly send troops? On what grounds would they support Zhao? From the beginning, Great King, you should have been more cautious in attacking Yan," he rebuked loudly.

"You..." Looking at Zhao Yi, who rejected his entire plan, Zhao Yan was filled with anger, but mostly he felt helpless.

If he had truly become a sovereign known for expanding territories, perhaps he could have dealt with Zhao Yi directly, for the full court would have been intimidated by such prestige. But what was the situation now? He had failed. If he didn't withdraw the army from Yan, the state would be doomed. Under pressure from the entire court, Zhao Yan, with utmost reluctance, decreed, "Draft the edict. Order Senior General Pang Xuan to withdraw the troops."

"The Great King is wise!" Zhao Yi immediately cried out, a smug expression crossing his face.

At this moment, Zhao Yan's attempt to bolster his prestige had ended in failure.

"Reporting to the Great King," Guo Kai said as he stepped forward. "I have an important matter to report."

Seeing that it was Guo Kai, whom he trusted immensely, Zhao Yan immediately responded, "Speak quickly, Prime Minister."

"According to intelligence, the Qin Army has split into two groups to attack Zhao. One is the main force under Wang Jian's command. The other is the Qin Northern Border Army, whose purpose is to hold our Dai Territory Frontier Army at bay, though their numbers are few. Now, if we wish to protect Zhao, not only must the army from Yan return to defend us, but our forces in the Dai Territory must also respond. If General Li Mu could crush the Qin Northern Border Army, it would be a great victory. Once they are defeated, Wang Jian would certainly lose his aggressive edge and withdraw his troops. In my opinion, General Li Mu should take the offensive," Guo Kai said gravely.

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yan pondered deeply.

If Li Mu can defeat Meng Wu, it would break the stalemate and free up the Frontier Army. They could then be moved to reinforce Zhao and help fend off Wang Jian. If the Qin Army can be defeated, I can redeploy my troops and attack Yan again. He was already swayed by Guo Kai's argument.

"The Prime Minister makes a valid point," Zhao Yan nodded immediately in agreement. "If we can eliminate the Qin forces raiding the Dai Territory, the heartland of Zhao will indeed be safe."

But Zhao Yi furrowed his brow and promptly objected, "Great King, you must not allow General Li Mu to launch an attack! The Qin Army is cunning. If General Li Mu takes the offensive, I fear it will not end well. On the contrary, he might fall into a trap set by Qin. In my view, General Li Mu ought to focus on defense."

Guo Kai immediately stepped forward. "Lord Chunping, your words are absurd. General Li Mu is a Shangjiangjun of Zhao, and he carries the weighty responsibility of defending our territories. With an enemy invading, how can he only focus on defense? As a general of Zhao, it is his duty to crush any strong foe. If he cannot do so, then we must choose someone more capable," Guo Kai said righteously.

Zhao Yan instantly understood. "Well said! If Li Mu cannot defeat this powerful enemy, then we shall select someone more capable. I will give Li Mu three months. If he cannot defeat the invading Qin forces in that time, then I shall choose another to take his place."

Hearing this, Zhao Yi shot an annoyed glare at Guo Kai, but he was helpless. He could clearly see that Guo Kai and Zhao Yan were in cahoots, evidently intending to make Li Mu a scapegoat. This was Guo Kai's goal.

Lian Po is already dead, so I have fulfilled the task assigned by Qin. Next, if I can strip Li Mu of his military power, it will be another great achievement. I trust the Great King will surely reward me abundantly in the future. Guo Kai thought gleefully to himself.

Guo Kai, known in history as the Qin War God, had struck once again!

「Yan, Yuyang City!」

Two hundred thousand Yan Army soldiers defended the city, with reinforcements continuously being summoned. The elite forces of Zhao, under Pang Xuan's command, were invincible, and Yan's national power was simply not enough to contend with them. Among all the various countries, the combat power of the Yan Army was only slightly stronger than that of Han.

At this moment, nearly half of Yan's territory had already fallen into the hands of Zhao Jun. Countless Zhao soldiers were attacking in relentless waves, while the Yan Army fought desperately to defend their ground.

In the command center of the Zhao army, a messenger rushed in. "Shangjiangjun! An urgent edict has arrived from Handan! The king has decreed a withdrawal!" the messenger, who had come from Handan, announced, holding up the Royal Edict for Pang Xuan.

Upon hearing this, the expression on Pang Xuan's face, seated upon his war chariot, changed drastically. "What did you say? Withdraw?" His voice was strained.

"Yes," the messenger said respectfully, presenting the Royal Edict to him.

The latter's face turned livid as he accepted the edict. As he read its contents, his complexion became deathly pale.

"Shangjiangjun, can it be that the king truly wants us to withdraw?" Zhao Cong, a general at his side, asked with worry. "The destruction of Yan is at stake in this critical battle. We just need to breach this city, and Yan will be no more! It would be a feat for the ages."

"General Zhao," Pang Xuan began, "I do not wish to withdraw, and neither does the king. But now... Qin has already captured Jinyang, and General Lian Po has died in battle. If we do not return to defend our home, Zhao is in great peril." He let out a deep sigh.

"But only Yuyang City remains! We've been attacking it for days and have lost so many officers and men. I just can't bear to retreat like this," Zhao Cong said, gritting his teeth.

"Whether you can bear it or not, there is nothing to be done," Pang Xuan sighed once more. "If we do not withdraw, Zhao will truly be annihilated by Qin."

Finally, he raised the hand he never wanted to raise and issued the order he most dreaded in his life: "Sound the gong to retreat!"

Instantly, the sound of the gong reverberated before Yuyang City. The Zhao Jun, who had been attacking fiercely, heard the command and began an orderly retreat toward the rear.

Atop the walls of Yuyang City, Yan Dan, clad in battle armor, watched the retreating Zhao Jun with puzzlement. "Why is the Zhao Jun suddenly retreating? This doesn't seem like Pang Xuan's style," he said, frowning deeply.

"Perhaps," Yue Cheng spoke gravely, "Qin has now threatened Zhao."

"We haven't been able to receive any news from Zhao, as Pang Xuan has blocked all communications. Could it be that something truly has happened there?" Yan Dan's eyes brightened.

"It must be," Yue Cheng insisted. "Otherwise, Pang Xuan would never withdraw. At such a moment, I propose we immediately lead our troops to pursue and deal a heavy blow to the Zhao Jun!"

"No," Yan Dan said, waving his hand dismissively.

"What does the Crown Prince mean?" Yue Cheng asked, confused.

"Firstly, Pang Xuan's army is well-disciplined, and their withdrawal is orderly. We wouldn't gain much by pursuing them.

"Secondly, even if we did manage to inflict heavy losses on the Zhao Jun, would that truly be a good thing for us?

"If Qin were to annihilate Zhao, then one day, our state of Yan would have even more to worry about. Ying Zheng... he's ambitious as a wolf," Yan Dan said coldly.