

Longevity 249

Chapter 249: Zhao Feng's Ferocity, Wang Jian's Astonishment

「The following day!」

Nearly three hundred thousand Qin soldiers approached the eastern, western, and southern gates of Wu'an City. Since launching their attack on the Zhao state from the Lantian Camp, they had lost quite a few Sharp Warriors along the way, but their casualties were far fewer than those of the Zhao state.

The Qin army now had a total of 240,000 soldiers arrayed before the walls of Wu'an City.

The only full-strength unit was under Zhao Feng's command of one hundred thousand troops. However, fifty thousand of them were newly recruited Sharp Warriors who, to an outsider, seemed to lack much combat experience. The other two main encampments each had about seventy thousand soldiers.

Attacking the heavily defended Wu'an City with such a force seemed like an even match. Moreover, the Zhao forces held a certain advantage, as they had the benefit of defending the city.

Faced with such a defensive posture, the Zhao forces were obviously not going to take the initiative, leaving the Qin with no choice but to attack. Without a doubt, this war was a test of national power and military strength, as well as wartime endurance. Whichever side failed to hold on would face utter collapse.

"Senior General," a trusted aide reported to Pang Xuan, "the Qin army has divided into three prongs corresponding to their three main camps. They are now at the east, west, and south gates. Judging by their formations, they are prepared to attack at any moment."

"Attacking three gates while leaving one open... not cutting off our army's escape route. If they breach the walls, our morale will shatter," Pang Xuan mused aloud. "Wang Jian, your calculations are indeed sharp. But I, Pang Xuan, will not fear you."

"Pass down my order!" he commanded. "Zhao Cong will defend the West Gate, Yan Ju will defend the East Gate, and Zhao Li will defend the South Gate. Each general will command eighty thousand troops for the defense. I will personally lead sixty thousand troops to defend the North Gate as the Supervisory Army."

"This is a battle to the death. No one is to retreat without my command. Violators will be executed!" Pang Xuan ordered coldly.

"Understood," the trusted aide immediately responded.

"Wang Jian," Pang Xuan declared coldly, "though Lian Po is dead, I, Pang Xuan, am no weaker than he was. I will hold Wu'an and stop your Qin army right here."

At that moment, a great roar erupted from the three gates of Wu'an City.

"Daqin Elite Soldiers!"

"Wind! Wind! Wind!"

Following the thunderous chants, the air filled with new sounds.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!

WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH!

Hundreds of stone-throwing machines hurled boulders toward Wu'an City. In the void above, hundreds of falling rocks descended like meteors, smashing fiercely into the city. Accompanying these stones was an endless rain of arrows, also loosed into Wu'an City.

The Qin army's tactics were as consistent as ever: pave the way with arrows and wash the city in blood, weakening the enemy's effective strength as much as possible.

At all three gates, the archers stood just out of the Zhao forces' range and unleashed their arrows relentlessly.

At the West Gate, Zhao Feng stood calmly atop a war chariot, observing the thirty thousand archers firing their volleys.

"After noon, the army will attack," he announced. "Tu Sui, Zhang Han."

"Your subordinates are here!" the two generals immediately responded.

"Tu Sui, you will lead fifty thousand soldiers and follow me in the assault. Zhang Han, you will lead fifty thousand soldiers and follow close behind," Zhao Feng commanded. "During the siege, the battle formations must not break. Are all the siege engines ready?"

"Rest assured, General," Tu Sui replied at once. "Three hundred ladders and thirty battering rams have been prepared. Everything is ready."

"Our arrows are plentiful, enough to suppress the enemy until noon," Zhang Han added promptly.

"Good." Zhao Feng nodded, gazing at Wu'an City in the distance. "Our three main camps from Lantian are attacking simultaneously. Whoever breaches the city first will earn the highest merit."

My army will claim this glory.

Tu Sui and Zhang Han's gazes were firm. "We swear to follow you to the death, General!"

To Zhao Feng, this battle was not like Jinyang; there was no need for him to concede anything. In this battle, he wanted to slay his enemies and collect their Attributes. He also wanted the battle merits. On the battlefield, strength speaks for itself. If Wang Ben and Yang Duanhe could breach the city first, that would be a testament to their own ability. After all, battle merits were now extremely important to Zhao Feng, as they were the qualifications he needed to become a Shangjiangjun. To be promoted to the rank of Shangjiangjun, both merit and seniority were indispensable. Throughout his campaign, Zhao Feng had

accumulated sufficient battle merits, all of which had been duly rewarded. His seniority, however, was not so easily attained. Therefore, Zhao Feng had to use battle merits to build his seniority until he could be appointed as a Shangjiangjun. Breaching the city first would be a great achievement. If, one day, he could conquer Handan and capture the King of Zhao, that would be another. Zhao Feng was determined to contend for these honors.

In the void above Wu'an City, the Qin army's rain of arrows and the volley of stones from the throwing machines continued unabated. Under the absolute suppression of these weapons, the Qin army had yet to suffer any casualties, but the Zhao forces within the city were already taking heavy losses.

"Dodge, quickly, dodge!"

"Shield-bearers to the front! Everyone else, take cover under the eaves!"

"Hurry!"

The chaos among the Zhao troops continued under the relentless barrage. No matter how they tried to hide, Zhao soldiers fell every moment. The endless volleys from the void above the three gates were impossible to avoid completely. Even though Pang Xuan had anticipated the Qin arrows and prepared his troops, they were still overwhelmed when the barrage began.

"General," a Deputy General said to Zhao Cong, "the Qin army hasn't launched its ground assault yet. What is their objective?"

"Do not lower your guard," Zhao Cong said solemnly. "Defend with all your might. The Qin army could attack at any moment. It is their consistent tactic to use arrows for suppression before storming the city

with that momentum. The Senior General has already given the order. This is a fight to the death. Our army will not retreat. Those who retreat will be beheaded."

Time passed as Zhao Feng stood atop his war chariot, waiting for noon to arrive.

He raised his head to look at the sun high in the sky. Spring had passed, and summer had arrived, making the sun's heat more intense. As the sun hung high in the void, noon had come. Zhao Feng slowly drew the Dragon Spring sword from his waist, descended from the war chariot, and walked to the front of the Vanguard Army.