

## Longevity 259

### Chapter 259: Ying Zheng's Joy, Xia Wuqie's Shock! (Part 3)

Ying Zheng laughed heartily as he applauded. In his hands, he held a battle report, and one could see just how pleased he was at that moment.

"Your Majesty," Yu Liao began with a hearty laugh, "judging from this battle report, General Zhao Feng has once again claimed the primary credit for the great victory at Wu'an City. He led from the front and breached the West City, causing the collapse of the Zhao army's defenses. This merit belongs entirely to General Zhao Feng."

"In Qin, meritorious deeds must be rewarded," Ying Zheng declared, still laughing. "Yu Qing, record this merit for Zhao Feng. After the annihilation of Zhao, I shall grant all the awards together."

The fall of Wu'an City meant Handan was within reach, and the annihilation of Zhao was imminent. Ying Zheng was visibly excited; all the humiliations of his youth would finally be washed away.

"Your Majesty is wise," Yu Liao called out loudly.

A sharp glint in his eyes, Ying Zheng spoke slowly, "Now that the Daqin Elite Soldiers are at the city's gates, it is time to go to Handan. I have waited for this day for a very long time."

"Your Majesty, you absolutely must not!" Wang Wan immediately stepped forward to dissuade him. "The Zhao state has not yet been completely destroyed, nor has Handan been conquered. Your Majesty cannot go to such a war-torn land."

"Father, you must not go to the Zhao state," Fusu also promptly stepped forward to plead.

"Please, Your Majesty, retract your order!" the entire court of civil and military officials called out in unison.

Ying Zheng's expression remained calm. With a single raise of his hand, the shouting in the hall instantly quieted.

"In my youth, I was a hostage in the Zhao state, where I endured torments and humiliations unimaginable to ordinary men," he said slowly. "When I left, I swore a secret oath that one day I would return as a sovereign lord to annihilate Zhao! This is not only about inheriting the great wish of my royal ancestors to unify the world, but also about a personal grudge I hold in my heart. Now that Qin's army is at the gates of Handan, I must go, no matter what."

Hearing his tone, the court officials all understood that Ying Zheng had made up his mind. His decision was irreversible.

"If Your Majesty goes to Handan, how shall the affairs of state be managed?" Wang Wan, his mind racing, immediately stepped forward to ask. It was obvious this old fox had a plan. If Ying Zheng left the kingdom and Fusu were to manage state affairs, it would intangibly cement Fusu's position. For Fusu, this was undoubtedly a good thing.

"I will be away no longer than one month," Ying Zheng stated. "For state affairs, Chancellor Wang, Huai Xiang, the Neishi, and the Tingwei shall handle matters by joint council. As for reviewing official petitions, Yu Qing will have the authority to approve them."

The men whose names were called felt a surge of joy. But deep down, Wang Wan and Huai Zhuang were disappointed. Ying Zheng had not asked Fusu to manage state affairs, which meant that in his eyes, Fusu had not yet attained the status of Crown Prince.

"We accept the decree." The appointed ministers stepped forward and respectfully accepted their orders.

"May I ask when Your Majesty will depart?" Yu Liao asked respectfully.

"We leave tomorrow," Ying Zheng stated slowly.

"How many Imperial Guards will accompany you?" Yu Liao asked.

"Five thousand men will suffice," Ying Zheng said with a slight smile.

"Isn't five thousand Imperial Guards too few for Your Majesty's journey?" Yu Liao asked, a hint of worry in his voice. It wasn't just the concern of a subject for his sovereign, but also that of one collaborator for another. In Yu Liao's view, only Ying Zheng was capable of unifying the world, and if he were to face any danger, the great cause of unification would be put on hold.

"Do I not have three hundred thousand sharp warriors in the Zhao state? Are they not enough to protect me?" Ying Zheng chuckled. "Enough, say no more. If there are no other matters to report, the court is dismissed." With that, he turned and left the great hall.

「Inside Zhangtai Palace」

For once, Ying Zheng was not reviewing petitions. Instead, he stood facing Yu Liao.

"Yu Qing," Ying Zheng instructed, "this time, I'm essentially entrusting you with the power to oversee the state. Regarding Wang Wan, Li Si, and the others, you must employ a balanced approach. Let them fight amongst themselves, as long as it does not affect our Qin. In any case, you need not fear them. Rest assured that I have your back."

"Please rest assured, Your Majesty," Yu Liao immediately guaranteed. "I will handle everything properly."

"With you here, I can rest easy," Ying Zheng said with a slight smile. He then added, "There should be some activity from Yan by now, right?"

"Indeed, Yan has made some moves," Yu Liao sneered. "They are massing troops on the Zhao-Yan border. It seems they have some ideas."

"Yan Dan is indeed both naïve and ambitious," Ying Zheng sneered in return. "Naïve enough to think he can snatch meat from my hands." How could Yan's troop movements on the border and their eagerness to act possibly escape the notice of Qin's intelligence? Ying Zheng saw through their aims at a glance.

"Your Majesty, how should we deal with Yan?" Yu Liao asked.

"Would I let others snatch the meat from Qin's jaws?" Ying Zheng's voice was cold. "After Handan falls, Yan will surely move against Zhao to seize their cities. As long as they dare to take them, I dare to annihilate their invading forces. If they want to snatch meat from my jaws, I'd like to see if the Yan Kingdom dares to wage war against my Qin."

Yu Liao smiled. "Your Majesty is wise."

Just then, Zhao Gao's voice echoed from outside the hall, "Imperial Physician Xia has arrived!"

Ying Zheng and Yu Liao immediately turned their gazes toward the hall entrance. There, Xia Wuqie, dressed in the official robes of an Imperial Physician, walked slowly into the grand hall.

"Your Majesty." Xia Wuqie bowed deeply.

"Imperial Physician Xia," Yu Liao greeted with a smile and a fist salute.

"Yu Qing, if there is nothing else, you may leave to prepare," Ying Zheng said. "You will be quite busy for the foreseeable future."

"Your servant takes his leave." Without another word, Yu Liao bowed deeply, turned, and left Zhangtai Palace.

After Yu Liao had gone, Ying Zheng glanced at Zhao Gao at the doorway.

"Your servant takes his leave." A shiver ran down Zhao Gao's spine as he immediately closed the heavy doors to the hall.

"Father-in-law," Ying Zheng said with a slight smile, "I set out for the Zhao state tomorrow. I called you here today to ask you to come with me."

"Is Handan about to fall?" Xia Wuqie asked with a touch of surprise.

"Soon," Ying Zheng said confidently. "Within a month, Handan will be ours."

"Since Your Majesty has invited me, this old servant will naturally accompany you." Xia Wuqie smiled lightly, a glimmer of anticipation in his eyes.

"Father-in-law," Ying Zheng said in a grave voice, "Dong'er might be in Handan. Of all the places in the world, the last place she could be is Handan. When we take the city, I will order a search of every corner."

"Let's hope so." Xia Wuqie smiled faintly, but his smile was tinged with bitterness. Ever since hearing what Concubine Zhao had said, a profound darkness had settled in Xia Wuqie's heart. He just couldn't bring himself to believe it. He was an old man; how could he have imagined his own daughter being harmed by Concubine Zhao? Besides, if it were true, how could he bear to speak of it? If he told Ying Zheng... it would mean that his own mother had not only betrayed him but had also killed the woman he loved most. Ying Zheng would never be able to bear that.

"Go home and prepare well today, Father-in-law. We set out tomorrow," Ying Zheng said with a smile.

In front of Xia Wuqie, the king seemed genuinely happy. Handan. He was on the verge of getting his revenge, and he might even find the woman he loved most. No matter how slim the hope, Ying Zheng clung to it with all his might. It was the one conviction that sustained him.

Why did Qin have no Queen? The ministers who had lived through those years understood. Why did Qin have no Crown Prince? Those same ministers knew that if that woman were still alive, she would have been the Queen of Qin long ago. If she had borne him an heir, that son would surely have long been the Crown Prince. To Ying Zheng, only she and everything about her truly mattered.

"This trip to Handan will be a good opportunity for me to see that disciple of mine. I haven't seen Master Chen since the campaign against Han," Xia Wuqie said with a light smile.

"With Master Chen serving as the chief military doctor in Lantian Camp, he can be promoted to Imperial Physician after the conquest of Zhao," Ying Zheng said with a smile.

"This old minister thanks Your Majesty on behalf of my unworthy disciple," Xia Wuqie said, not refusing the offer. To become an Imperial Physician... that was his disciple's greatest wish.

"Father-in-law, you are too kind," Ying Zheng said, smiling. "I am not showing favoritism; these are all things Master Chen has earned. His contributions as the chief military doctor in Lantian Camp over the years have been substantial."

"Speaking of contributions," Xia Wuqie said with a smile, "I'm even more curious about Zhao Feng. The medical techniques he created have saved countless injured soldiers, and he is so very young. This time when we go to the Zhao state, I must meet him in person."

"It's not just you who's curious about this young man, Father-in-law. So am I," Ying Zheng said, smiling. "To defeat Wei Wuji and behead Lian Po at the age of eighteen, and to strike terror into the world... Even the Lord Wu'an of old had not achieved such feats at his age."

"Perhaps this is the will of Heaven, suggesting that in the future, Your Majesty will also have a Lord Wu'an to assist you," Xia Wuqie said, stroking his beard with a smile.

"Precisely," Ying Zheng said with great confidence. "In the past, King Zhaoxiang regarded Lord Wu'an as his commander, but in the end, he had him executed. If Zhao Feng is truly to be my Lord Wu'an, I will certainly not repeat that mistake."

He truly did hold Zhao Feng in the highest regard.