

Longevity 27

Chapter 27: Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Shock!

Wang Yan said nothing, merely looking at Zhao Feng.

"The Logistics Army camp where you were has not yet been relocated. I have arranged for quarters for you in the main encampment," Wang Yan said slowly. "Also, General Li Teng wishes to see you tonight. I will send someone to inform you when it is time."

"Why does General Li want to see me?" Zhao Feng asked.

"You will know when you see him," Wang Yan replied.

"Alright." Zhao Feng nodded, asking no more questions.

"I'm leaving now."

Wang Yan gave Zhao Feng one last look. Seeing he had nothing else to say to her, she felt a slight disappointment but turned and prepared to depart. However, when she reached the entrance of the Wounded Soldier Camp, she stopped in her tracks again.

"It's true that I joined the army to prove myself, but do you even know why I have to? Do you think I really wanted this?"

With those words, Wang Yan left, her heart filled with a sense of frustrated indignation.

Zhao Feng found it all rather strange.

How the hell would I know why you want to prove yourself? Is there any reason to be so resentful toward me? he thought, completely baffled. They had only met once, yet he could clearly hear the bitterness in her words.

Nearby, Master Chen watched the departing Wang Yan with a smile before turning his gaze to Zhao Feng.

"Kid," Master Chen said cheerfully, "you're quite lucky with the ladies."

"What do you mean, 'lucky with the ladies'?" Zhao Feng asked, perplexed.

"I know of that young woman; her background is anything but simple. If she's taken a liking to you, a great future awaits," Master Chen teased.

"Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Chen. I barely know her," Zhao Feng said in annoyance. "And what's this about being 'taken a liking to'?"

"I'd heard someone saved her life amidst the chaos of battle, but I didn't know who it was. Now I see it was you, kid. The debt of saving a life! That's an enormous favor, a heavenly gift. Wouldn't you call that destiny?" Master Chen smiled.

Zhao Feng shot him a sideways glance before turning to tend to the wounded soldiers.

Master Chen watched him go, a smile playing on his lips. Who would have thought! General Wang Jian's precious daughter has her eye on someone. At fifteen, she is precisely the age for an arranged marriage. The King is considering betrothing Wang Jian's daughter to Mr. Fusu. To avoid it, she joined the army, hoping to change her fate with military merit. Wang Jian's daughter is truly a remarkable woman.

「Xianyang!」

In the solemn and majestic Grand Hall of the King of Qin, the air was thick with tension.

"Greed for merit and a rash advance! Failing to station enough troops to secure Yang City! Pursuing the enemy before the city was cleared! Allowing Bao Yuan to hide nearly ten thousand soldiers in Yang City to strike our rear and raid Qin's supply lines."

From his high throne, Ying Zheng's face was ashen with fury. "Li Teng, you have greatly disappointed me."

"Your Majesty, calm your anger!" all the ministers in the court raised their court tablets, shouting in unison.

Bao Yuan's surprise attack from within Yang City had jeopardized the certain annihilation of Han. It could even be called a defeat—a defeat that was entirely avoidable.

"Rest assured, Your Majesty," Yu Liao stepped forward and said loudly. "Though Bao Yuan launched a surprise ambush, his forces are ultimately limited. More importantly, he is facing the great General Wang Jian. This attack on Qin's supply lines will cause some losses, but it is not enough to affect Qin's conquest of Han."

Ying Zheng nodded, his expression icy. "I hope so! For the losses in this battle, the blame lies with Li Teng. We will record his demerits for now and deal with his punishment later."

The war had reached a critical stage, the key moment for conquering Han. Ying Zheng was not so foolish as to change generals in the middle of a campaign.

Just then, a loud shout echoed from outside the Grand Hall.

"Report!"

The gazes of all the civil and military officials converged on the entrance, most filled with trepidation. A messenger holding a command flag rushed into the hall. He carried a bamboo tube in his hand and a box strapped to his back.

"An urgent report from the Senior General! For the King's perusal."

The messenger bowed deeply, hastily taking the bamboo tube from his back.

Ying Zheng's eyes shot toward him.

At his side, Zhao Gao descended the dais, swiftly took the bamboo tube, and hurried back up the steps with a bow. Returning before Ying Zheng, Zhao Gao immediately opened the tube and took out the bamboo slips containing the urgent report.

"For Your Majesty's perusal." Zhao Gao knelt, presenting the report with both hands.

Ying Zheng took the report with a blank expression and began to read. As he did, a look of surprise flashed across his face. Once he finished, a smile quietly bloomed on his previously ashen features.

"Hahaha! Bao Yuan, Bao Yuan! All your planning has come to naught," Ying Zheng laughed heartily.

With that laugh, the oppressive atmosphere that had enveloped the hall instantly dissipated. The ministers exchanged glances, all understanding that the report must contain good news from Wang Jian.

"Your Majesty," Li Si stepped forward and asked tentatively, "has the Senior General annihilated Bao Yuan?"

"Not only annihilated him," Ying Zheng declared with a delighted laugh, "Bao Yuan is dead. After this, Han has no capable generals left to halt the might of the Qin Army."

As the first state in Qin's eastern campaign of unification, its conquest was of the utmost importance to Ying Zheng. Failure in the first battle was not an option, which was why Li Teng's reckless pursuit of glory had so enraged him.

"Congratulations, Your Majesty! The fall of Han is imminent!" the officials chorused in unison.

"The Senior General's command abilities are far beyond those of Bao Yuan," Yu Liao said with a smile. "Bao Yuan's risky tactics were ultimately no match for the strength of the Qin Army."

"You are mistaken, Yu Qing," Ying Zheng countered with a smile, a peculiar look on his face. "This victory was not achieved by Wang Jian."

"If the Senior General did not annihilate Bao Yuan, then who did? Could it be that Li Teng realized his error and turned his army back?" Yu Liao asked immediately.

"This report will astonish every one of you," Ying Zheng said, waving the bamboo slips. He handed them to Zhao Gao. "Read it!"

Zhao Gao took the bamboo slips, faced the court, and read aloud, his hoarse voice resounding through the hall. "Your humble servant Wang Jian reports to the King! In the battle at Yang City, Li Teng, in his

blind pursuit of merit, failed to leave sufficient forces to defend. This gave Bao Yuan an opportunity to launch a surprise attack on our army and on Yang City.

"Due to Bao Yuan's surprise attack, our first Logistics Army of ten thousand men suffered over 9,300 casualties.

"But at the critical moment of the rout, a brave platoon leader from the Logistics Army took action. He led his troops to counter the enemy, ultimately rallying all the fleeing soldiers of the Logistics Army to turn and fight. With fewer than five thousand men, this Logistics Army force successfully held off nearly seven thousand elite Han troops, buying enough time for the five thousand Sharp Warriors garrisoned in Yang City to arrive as reinforcements. The two forces then joined together and successfully annihilated the enemy.

"In this battle, the Logistics Army fought with heroic valor! Though they are not Sharp Warriors, they proved worthy of the name of Da Qin soldiers. This is a great merit!

"And the key to the Logistics Army's counterattack was a single man..."