

Longevity 279

Chapter 279: Ying Zheng Shocked, Captures the King of Zhao!

Just a few miles outside Handan City.

Five thousand Imperial Guards, all cavalry, escorted a nine-horse imperial carriage. The guards were fully armed: clad in battle armor, with quivers on their backs, longbows hanging from their saddles, longspears in hand, and swords at their waists. Among all the states, whether it was Qin or any other, the Imperial Guard Army was always the elite of the nation's military, selected from the finest soldiers. These five thousand members of the Qin Imperial Guard Army possessed the combat strength to withstand an attack from twenty thousand enemy troops without being defeated, and could even annihilate them.

「Inside the imperial carriage.」

Ying Zheng and Xia Wuqie sat within, both somewhat weary from the long days of travel. After all, since returning to Qin, Ying Zheng had been consumed with administrative affairs and had not practiced martial arts, so his physique was not as robust as it once was. As for Xia Wuqie, he was simply getting on in years.

"We have entered Handan's territory, have we not?" Ying Zheng called out.

"Replying, Great King," Ren Xiao respectfully responded from outside. "We are now merely three miles from Handan."

"Handan, the Zhao Capital." A smile touched Ying Zheng's lips. He then drew back the side curtain of the imperial carriage to gaze at the scenery outside.

"Over a decade has passed. I never imagined we would one day return," Ying Zheng said with a touch of emotion.

Hearing this, Xia Wuqie also opened the curtain on his side. He looked out at the endless, desolate land. The air was thick with the stench of blood, a smell that Xia Wuqie, as a great physician, could easily detect.

"Indeed," Xia Wuqie sighed inwardly. "The land remains, but the people have changed."

Zhao... that was once his home state. Of course, if one thought in terms of loyalty to a single state, it was a sad reality. But if one considered the grand cause of unifying Huaxia, it was for the greater good. Was not Han Fei himself drawn by this very ideal, ultimately leading him to return to Qin? Likewise, as a great physician, Xia Wuqie possessed a vision far exceeding that of ordinary men. He was keenly aware that the internecine warfare among the Huaxia ethnic group had persisted for hundreds of years, claiming countless lives. If the warring states could be extinguished and Huaxia unified, then every sacrifice would be worthwhile.

"Father-in-law," Ying Zheng said with a smile, his eyes full of anticipation, "we will soon have the chance to see Dong'er. Our family will surely be reunited."

Xia Wuqie gave a faint smile and said no more. Ying Zheng's hopes and wishes were his own, but he knew his daughter might no longer be in this world. The mad words of Concubine Zhao haunted him daily like a nightmare, filling him with a despair that he concealed from everyone, even from Ying Zheng, whom he regarded as a son.

「At that moment.」

"Great King," Ren Xiao's voice came from outside. "A contingent of the Qin Army from Lantian Camp is ahead. It appears to be General Wang Jian, here to receive you."

"Hm. Advance," Ying Zheng commanded gravely.

"Yes, Great King," Ren Xiao immediately replied.

The Imperial Guard Army continued to escort the imperial carriage forward. Soon, they arrived behind the main army encampment near Handan City. Now that they were close, the pungent stench of blood was overwhelming, detectable even from a thousand meters away. The bodies littering the ground before the walls and the Qin banners now flying from the city's towers all declared one critical fact: Handan City had been breached by Qin.

"They breached Handan City so quickly? How long has it even been? The Great King's journey from Xianyang was meant to take half a month, but we hastened our march at his command and entered Handan territory in ten days. Does that mean the Lantian Camp conquered Handan City in less than ten days? General Wang Jian is truly incredible. For such a mighty fortress to fall so easily... He truly is the greatest war general of our Qin."

Seeing the state of Handan City, the Imperial Guards escorting the king's carriage could not hide their astonishment. None of them had expected Handan to fall with such ease.

"I, Wang Jian, leading my trusted aides, respectfully welcome the Great King," Wang Jian said, striding quickly to the imperial carriage and bowing deeply. "Long live the Great King! Long live Qin!"

Ren Xiao immediately drew the carriage curtain aside.

Ying Zheng stepped out of the carriage. A smile appeared on his face when he saw Wang Jian. "Senior General, dispense with the formalities," he said, moving forward to help Wang Jian rise.

"Thank you, Great King," Wang Jian responded promptly.

"Looking at your state, Senior General, it seems you have not slept for several days?" Ying Zheng observed Wang Jian closely, noting his red, swollen eyes and the deep, dark circles beneath them—a clear sign of sleeplessness.

"The Sharp Warriors of Lantian Camp have relentlessly assaulted Handan for nearly six days without rest. How could I dare to rest alone?" Wang Jian replied respectfully.

Hearing this, Ying Zheng raised his head and looked toward Handan City. When he saw the Qin banners flying above the ramparts, he felt a jolt of shock, and a look of astonishment crossed his face. "My journey from Xianyang took ten days in total. At that time, Senior General, you had not yet begun the attack on Handan. Only a few days have passed, yet you have already conquered the city? Senior General, you are truly the Qin War God."

Faced with Ying Zheng's praise, Wang Jian immediately replied, "Great King, the credit for this victory does not belong to me."

Although the glory of this battle was immense—conquering a state’s capital in just five days, a city far more difficult to take than the Han Capital—Wang Jian was not the type of man to hoard accolades. Strictly speaking, however, the credit was indeed his. As the Senior General of Lantian Camp, the strategic deployment of troops had been his decision alone.