

Longevity 284

Chapter 284: Capturing the King of Zhao! Ying Zheng Ascends Longtai! (Part 2)

Good ministers are matched with powerful monarchs, and such is the state of Qin today.

"The great ambition of the former kings, the great ambition of the Old Qin People," Ying Zheng said with boundless dominance as he looked down upon Handan. "I will never forget. Only Qin can unify all under Heaven. I will surely achieve it."

Once Handan fell, the state of Zhao would perish. Qin would have annihilated two of the Three Jins, and Zhao had been the strongest of them all. Looking out over the entire realm, only Chu possessed power comparable to Zhao's; one might even say their national strengths were on par.

As time passed, Ying Zheng remained on the city tower, his hands clasped behind his back, never descending. Compared to staying inside a campaign tent, Ying Zheng much preferred the feeling of having Handan City under his feet. This sensation of a king's triumphant return, tinged with a feeling of vengeance, was immensely satisfying to him.

Roughly six hours passed.

"Report!"

"We have just received a battle report from within the city! The Zhao Royal Palace has been conquered by General Zhao Feng, and the entire palace is now under the control of his subordinates!" the Personal Guard Commander reported, striding forward with an excited expression.

"Has Zhao Yan been captured?" Ying Zheng's eyes snapped open as he asked at once.

"Reporting to the Great King," the Personal Guard Commander immediately replied. "When General Zhao attacked the Royal Palace, the King of Zhao received the news and immediately fled from the rear of the palace with his ministers. However, General Zhao is already leading his troops in pursuit."

"Zhao Yan," Ying Zheng said coldly, his tone filled with undisguised disgust. "After all these years, he is still so craven and useless."

The thought of Zhao Yan brought Ying Zheng back to the past. Because of a conflict between them, Zhao Yan had developed a murderous intent and led a surprise assault one night. It was in that very attack that his teacher, Shen Yue, had perished. That day, Ying Zheng had held Zhao Yan at sword point. In his fury, he had almost killed the man without regard for the consequences, and Zhao Yan had been so terrified he had wet his pants. But at the critical moment, his teacher had stopped him.

"Please rest assured, Great King," Wang Jian said with a smile, his trust in his son-in-law absolute. "Zhao Feng will surely capture the King of Zhao and bring him back."

Ying Zheng smiled, then suddenly turned to look at Wang Jian. "Wang Qing, tell me, after this successful campaign to destroy Zhao, how should I reward Zhao Feng?"

Hearing this, Wang Jian's heart trembled. He hurriedly replied, "That is for the Great King to decide. This subject dares not say more. After all, although I am a Senior General of Qin, I am also Zhao Feng's father-in-law. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter."

Having navigated the court of Qin for so many years, Wang Jian was extremely cautious, despite being a Military Commander. He knew precisely when to speak and when to remain silent.

At this moment, it was clear from Ying Zheng's words that he intended to promote Zhao Feng even further.

If he were advanced another step... what would Zhao Feng's rank and authority be then? He would hold the same rank as me, Protector-General and Senior General. If that really happened... Zhao Feng would become the youngest Senior General in Qin, perhaps in all the lands under Heaven.

Observing Wang Jian's reaction, Ying Zheng gave him a look but said nothing more.

"If he can capture Zhao Yan and bring him back to me, then for official reasons, I will make him the most decorated Senior General in our Qin. For personal reasons, this is doubly true," Ying Zheng said slowly.

This statement made his attitude clear, his meaning completely transparent. Wang Jian, however, felt a tremor in his heart. Although he had suspected as much, he hadn't thought Ying Zheng had truly made up his mind. If this came to pass, the Wang Family would become the most honored family in Qin. Not only was he a Senior General, but his son-in-law would be as well.

"But Great King, Zhao Feng is only nineteen years old," Wang Jian said hesitantly. "He lacks seniority. Moreover, his promotions have already been the fastest in all of Qin. If he is promoted again, there will certainly be many in the court who object. After all, there is no small number of Military Commanders who aspire to advance."

Ying Zheng turned to Wang Jian, his gaze filled with authority. "Senior General, you must remember this: Qin is my domain, and the system of military merit is the cornerstone of our state. Even if it were not Zhao Feng, even if it were not the Senior General's son-in-law, I would reward any War General with sufficient merit. In this campaign to destroy Zhao, whose contributions can compare to Zhao Feng's? It is true that he lacks seniority and is too young, but he is worthy of the honor. As long as he can capture Zhao Yan, his merits will be rewarded in full. When he returns to Xianyang, I will personally ennoble him as Protector-General," Ying Zheng declared in a deep voice, filled with indisputable dominance.

Seeing this, Wang Jian understood. Ying Zheng had already made his decision.

Of course, the one who made Ying Zheng so resolute was Zhao Yan. It was, as Ying Zheng had said, a matter of both public and private concern.

For official reasons, if Zhao Feng captured Zhao Yan, he would have earned the merit of capturing a king. Besides that, he had the merit of breaching Wu'an, of taking the Zhao Capital Handan, and of conquering the Zhao Royal Palace. Any single one of these accomplishments was enough for anyone under the Main General to be promoted in rank and title.

For personal reasons, Zhao Yan was the man who had murdered Ying Zheng's teacher. This was a private feud, a grudge etched into his very bones. Zhao Yan might think Ying Zheng despised him most for the bullying he endured as a child, but for Ying Zheng, his greatest hatred for Zhao Yan stemmed from the murder of his teacher.

"This subject understands," Wang Jian replied respectfully, saying no more.

"I imagine the city should be fully pacified within a day," Ying Zheng said with a faint smile.

"The Zhao Jun in the city will certainly be secured within a day," Wang Jian immediately replied.

"Arrange a place for me to rest," Ying Zheng instructed. "I will enter the city proper tomorrow."

"This servant accepts the decree," Wang Jian responded with a respectful bow.