

## Longevity 285

Chapter 285: Capturing the King of Zhao! Ying Zheng Arrives at the Dragon Terrace! (Part 3)

On the other side, north of Handan City, they were now less than ten miles from the capital.

"General."

"We really can't go on. Can we rest for a while?"

"Yes, my lord. Even if you want to deal with us, please let us rest. We're about to collapse from exhaustion."

"Let us rest for a while..."

By now, it was already approaching midday. Zhao Feng had been leading them for nearly four hours.

When they first fled, they had been a desperate mob, each person wishing they had more legs. But now, they wished they could slow down, dragging things out as much as possible.

"My Lord."

"Most of these people are nobility, accustomed to a life of luxury and comfort. After walking for so long, I fear they are truly on the verge of death."

"This subordinate suggests we let them rest for an hour. We shouldn't actually work them to death. After all, they are all military achievements," Zhang Ming said with a chuckle.

"Mm," Zhao Feng nodded, then spurred his horse to the side. He dismounted and sat down.

"By the general's command, everyone rest where you are!" Zhang Ming bellowed. "Anyone who moves beyond ten paces will be killed without question!"

At his command, the seven hundred trusted aides immediately spread out. The cavalry formed an outer perimeter, while the more than five hundred foot soldiers scattered to form an inner circle. At this moment, seven hundred of his trusted aides were guarding nearly three thousand people, composed mostly of Zhao nobility and their families, as well as servants from the Zhao Royal Palace.

"I must relieve myself," Zhao Yan said, his face flushed with anger.

"Just pee in your pants," Zhao Feng glanced at him.

"You will not humiliate me like this!"

"No matter what, I am still a king!" Zhao Yan said angrily.

"A king who fears death is nothing more than someone born to a better life—useless and incompetent," Zhao Feng retorted coldly.

"Then kill me," Zhao Yan said furiously. "If you kill me, Ying Zheng won't let you off either!"

"General," the Zhao official who had previously identified Zhao Yan said in a panic, "I... I also need to use the privy."

"You traitor! If it weren't for you, how would I have been exposed?" Zhao Yan glared furiously at the official.

"Zhao Yan, our statuses are all the same now; we're all prisoners," the senior minister of the Nine Ministers could no longer bear it and erupted in a tirade. "Besides, if you weren't so incompetent, we wouldn't have ended up like this. You, a traitorous wretch! The throne of Zhao rightfully belonged to Lord Chunping! You conspired against the minister, Mao Sui, who was sent to bring Lord Chunping back, preventing his return to Zhao. In the end, you, the son of a mere concubine, seized the throne. Do you really think that no one is aware of your hidden deeds? You're not a king at all! You're an unfilial son, a traitorous official!"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yan's face turned deathly pale.

"You... you..." He stared in fury but could not utter a single word.

What the old minister said was true. His ascension to the throne had indeed been illegitimate. Before the previous King of Zhao passed away, he had sent Minister Mao Sui to Qin to escort Crown Prince Zhao Yi back to Zhao. However, Mao Sui was intercepted and murdered along the way, a plot orchestrated by Guo Kai. Because of Mao Sui's death, Zhao Yi never returned, which allowed Zhao Yan to succeed the throne.

"What's wrong? Cat got your tongue?" the old minister sneered. "Did I strike a nerve? Let me tell you, Zhao Yan, of those men Guo Kai found for you, even though you secretly disposed of many, some slipped through the net. You are an unfilial son unworthy of your father and a traitorous official unfit to serve. You usurped your elder brother's position, and yet you dare to call yourself king? I spit on you!" The Zhao official, holding nothing back, unleashed a continuous barrage of curses.

The scolding was so intense that Zhao Yan could not even raise his head, at a complete loss for words. With that outburst, the way the surrounding people looked at Zhao Yan changed. Now that his usurpation of the throne was exposed, his ascension was no longer proper; he was a usurper. In this era, rightful succession and legitimacy were paramount. This revelation meant Zhao Yan had completely lost the people's support. He had no chance left.

"What a fine spectacle of dogs eating dogs," Zhao Feng watched the scene unfold with great amusement. He was, yet again, being treated to an entertaining show.

"Those who need to relieve themselves may leave the group, but you must stay within ten paces. Anyone who exceeds ten paces will still be killed," Zhao Feng announced slowly.

"Thank you, General!"

"Hurry, I'm about to burst!"

"Quick, let's go relieve ourselves."

One by one, the Zhao nobles stood up and walked toward the edge of the clearing.

"Calculate Attribute Points from enemy kills," Zhao Feng said, refocusing his mind and issuing the command.

A prompt appeared on the panel: "The war has not yet ended. Please wait, Host."

Seeing this, Zhao Feng was not surprised. It was clear that the battle within Handan City had not yet been fully decided and that the remnants of the Zhao army had not been completely eradicated.

I wonder if Emperor Qin Shi Huang has reached Handan yet. The once-in-a-millennium Emperor Qin Shi Huang... I'm truly curious about him.

Of course, Zhao Feng's reverence for Emperor Qin Shi Huang stemmed from his memories of future history. It was this historical filter that filled him with immense respect for this singular emperor of the ages. Without a doubt, the achievements of Emperor Qin Shi Huang were monumental.

「Inside Handan City!」

Escorted by the Imperial Guard Army, Ying Zheng walked step-by-step along the roads of Handan City. As far as the eye could see, there were corpses everywhere, and blood stained everything red. In the city, the common folk had all sealed their doors and windows, daring not to emerge. Of course, many defeated Zhao soldiers were undoubtedly hiding among them.

At that moment, the Logistics Army had yet to arrive. The elite soldiers in the city had only managed to clear a path along the main road, piling the bodies to the side. Still, the scene of mountains of corpses and a sea of blood, like Purgatory itself, was profoundly shocking. Inside Handan City, it was like Fengdu.

"It has been over a decade, yet the streets of Zhao haven't changed much," Ying Zheng remarked, walking slowly down these streets, an indescribable emotion on his face. He had grown up in this very city as a child, raised in humiliation.

"This subject visited the Zhao state once," Wang Jian said with a smile. "After the Battle of Changping, the National Power of the Zhao state weakened. Since then, Zhao has been focused on recovery, and all their wealth was spent on it. What capacity would they have had to repair buildings?"

"Zhao Yan is an incompetent man," Ying Zheng said with a cold laugh. "With his state's strength depleted, he still dreamed of destroying Yan. As far as I know, the taxation in Zhao had reached an eighty percent rate. For the people of Zhao, such exorbitant taxes were unbearable. And with such high taxes, he has left quite a mess for our Qin."

"Your Majesty is benevolent. Under Qin Law, I am confident these tax issues can be smoothed over quickly," Wang Jian said deferentially.

"Smoothing over the taxes will still be a drag on the National Power of Qin. For at least a year, we will be held back by the chaos in the Zhao state. However, this can also be seen as tearing down to rebuild," Ying Zheng said solemnly.

Under the protection of the Imperial Guard Army, Ying Zheng proceeded step-by-step toward the city center. With the elite soldiers of Lantian Camp and his own Imperial Guard Army, his safety was naturally not a concern. As he walked, especially through the outer city, Ying Zheng witnessed what could only be described as a horrific scene.

"In this battle, how many of Daqin's Elite Soldiers did we lose?" Ying Zheng could not help but ask as he looked upon the corpses of so many of his own men.

All this time, Ying Zheng had resided high up in Xianyang, where battlefield casualties were mere numbers on a report. But today, he truly witnessed what a field strewn with corpses looked like. The impact on him was immense.

"In this battle," Wang Jian immediately replied, "Commander Zhao Feng's main encampment suffered approximately 30,000 deaths and over 10,000 wounded. As for the other two main encampments, the total casualties are around 30,000, mostly wounded."

This, of course, was only a rough estimate. The exact numbers would not be known until the war was completely over.

"Remember this," Ying Zheng said to Wang Jian, his expression stern. "All the elite soldiers who died or were wounded for Qin must not be treated poorly. They deserve great honor. Regarding their pensions and compensation, even if our National Power is harmed by these conquests, I will not be negligent."

"This subject understands," Wang Jian immediately responded.

"Let's go. To the Zhao Royal Palace," Ying Zheng said with a faint smile. "Although I spent so many years in Zhao as a hostage, a hostage was forbidden from entering the Royal Palace. Things are different now." With that, he headed toward the palace.

「Inside Longtai Palace!」

Ying Zheng gazed at the royal throne of Zhao before him. As he ascended the steps, a chill radiated from him.

"Zhao Yan," he said, staring at the throne as if he could see his mortal enemy sitting there. "I have come."

"Your Majesty," Tu Sui and Zhang Han said, bowing respectfully to report the battle's results. "In this battle, our army has captured more than thirty Zhao officials, who are now all imprisoned in the military camp. The Zhao Royal Palace is also completely under our control."

"Tu Sui," Ying Zheng said with a smile, looking at him. "You have done well. Leaving the Yong City Guards back then was indeed the right decision."

"It is all due to Your Majesty's grace. Otherwise, this subject would not be here," Tu Sui replied respectfully.

Just then, a messenger ran in, shouting, "Report! An urgent message from General Zhao, from north of Handan!"



