

Longevity 29

Chapter 29: Rewards Bestowed Upon Zhao Feng

After a moment of calm, Ying Zheng finished reading the bamboo slips.

"Minister Xia," he began, closing the scrolls and looking up with a very serious expression, "is everything in this memorial you submitted indeed true?"

"This memorial was personally drafted and presented by Master Chen, a disciple of this old minister," Xia Wuqie replied. "It is absolutely true. The Suturing Skill and the cauterization and sterilization method are remarkably effective. Master Chen's study involved three hundred severely wounded soldiers. Of those, two hundred and seventy-five survived, with only twenty-five succumbing to their critical injuries."

"Moreover, not one of the survivors contracted the seven-day fever. This was simply impossible in the past," Xia Wuqie said, his face solemn, yet his aged features could not conceal his excitement.

For a physician, learning more advanced medical techniques was a joyous event, but being able to save more lives was a source of even greater happiness. The seven-day fever was an age-old, nearly unavoidable problem, but now, a method of prevention had been found. The Suturing Skill was a miraculous technique for stopping bleeding, allowing soldiers with severe hemorrhaging to stanch the flow of blood, yielding incredible results when paired with hemostatic medicine.

Upon hearing Xia Wuqie's words, the ministers in the court instantly understood why the man, who rarely attended court, had suddenly appeared today. For the Qin Army, this was truly a matter of monumental importance. In every major battle, the army suffered heavy losses among its wounded. These injured soldiers were the Sharp Warriors of Qin, and the death of any one of whom was a great pity, not to mention that every major battle resulted in at least a thousand wounded, if not more.

In the era of cold-steel weapons, most injuries involved internal organ damage and uncontrolled bleeding. And, of course, there was the nearly inescapable seven-day fever. In the past, it was considered exceptionally lucky if one or two out of ten severely wounded soldiers survived. Now, that number was completely reversed. The survival rate had increased so dramatically.

"Since Minister Xia has confirmed it, this medical technique must have its merits and its uses," Ying Zheng declared loudly. "And it has already been put into practice. Truly, heaven blesses Qin! One can see this young man's talent in medicine from these two innovative techniques alone."

"This old minister earnestly requests that this young man be transferred to the Lantian Military Medical Camp. My own unworthy disciple can instruct him for a time, and later, when he is summoned to Xianyang, I intend to teach him personally," Xia Wuqie said with a fervent, excited expression.

Hearing this, a helpless smile appeared on Ying Zheng's face. Previously, he would have agreed to any request from Xia Wuqie. But just moments ago, he had announced his decision to transfer Zhao Feng to the main camp. If such a valiant warrior were to become a military doctor, the entire world would laugh at Qin.

"Minister Xia," Ying Zheng said with a smile, "if you had asked for anyone else, perhaps I could grant your request. But this man, I cannot."

"Why?" Xia Wuqie's expression changed slightly, a look of puzzlement on his face. "My disciple mentioned that this man is just a soldier in the Logistics Army."

As these words fell, the ministers in court glanced from Xia Wuqie to Ying Zheng. In that instant, many of them had the same thought.

The Logistics Army... and the Great King is even refusing Doctor Xia? Could the one who created these new medical techniques also be that Zhao Feng? the quick-witted ministers couldn't help but wonder. Otherwise, Ying Zheng would never have refused Xia Wuqie.

"The soldier from the Logistics Army that Minister Xia speaks of is no trivial man," Ying Zheng explained. "Bao Yuan led his troops into hiding in Yang City to launch a surprise attack on our forces. If it were not for this man's valiant leadership of the Logistics Army in the face of the enemy, our supply lines would have been severed by Bao Yuan. He single-handedly killed three hundred enemy soldiers and personally beheaded Bao Yuan. Such a valiant warrior is far more than a simple member of the Logistics Army."

"General Wang Jian has already petitioned me to transfer this man to the main combat camp, and I have already given my consent," Ying Zheng finished with a smile.

Xia Wuqie looked astonished. "Is Zhao Feng truly that formidable?"

"He did indeed take me by great surprise," Ying Zheng admitted. "I had only just learned that this young man's combat prowess was so fierce he could be called a valiant warrior. I never expected that your arrival, Minister Xia, would bring me another piece of good news. To think he is also well-versed in medicine and has been of such great use in our army's Wounded Soldier Camp," Ying Zheng said, his tone one of genuine surprise.

Coming to his senses, Xia Wuqie said, "Since this man is a valiant warrior, and General Wang Jian has already made his request, it was presumptuous of this old minister. However, I can guarantee with my life that the medical techniques Zhao Feng created are unprecedented and truly miraculous. They are capable of sparing countless wounded soldiers of our great Qin from an early grave. On behalf of all the wounded soldiers of Qin, this old minister petitions the Great King to bestow a reward upon Zhao Feng."

Having said this, Xia Wuqie bowed deeply.

Ying Zheng waved his hand. "Minister Xia, rest assured. Anyone who renders meritorious service to our Qin will be rewarded!"

"Yu Qing."

"Draft an edict and send it to the Lantian Camp."

Yu Liao immediately stepped forward. "Your servant respectfully awaits the Royal Edict!"

"Zhao Feng, commander of the Logistics Army, has served the state with distinction. He fought valiantly, dispelled the threat of an enemy raid, and created new medical techniques to save the soldiers of Qin. All are great merits deserving of a great reward."

"Therefore, I decree:"

"Transfer Zhao Feng to the main battle camp to command troops, making him an officer of the Sharp Warriors!"

"Promote Zhao Feng by four ranks in office to Chief Junhou, with command over five thousand troops!"

"Elevate Zhao Feng's nobility by five ranks and bestow upon him the noble title of Senior Official!"

"His military salary, noble's annual salary, and allotted lands shall all be determined according to the system of military merit and will be conferred after the war," Ying Zheng decreed with an authoritative voice.

For his merits in killing enemies and slaying a general, Zhao Feng should have been promoted four ranks in nobility. This time, however, Ying Zheng granted him an additional rank. Compared to military office, a noble title was far more difficult to advance. After all, a title represented honors beyond military rank, including an annual salary and land grants.

"Your servant receives the edict," Yu Liao responded immediately.

"Tell General Wang Jian," Ying Zheng added, "that how this valiant warrior is to be used and deployed is for him to decide."

"I understand."

"A report for the Great King," Yu Liao said respectfully. "I have another matter to report."

"Speak," Ying Zheng said, looking toward him.

"Bao Yuan's hidden ambush succeeded due to Li Teng's greed for glory and his reckless advance. The Logistics Army is responsible for logistical matters, not for front-line combat. Yet, when they were ambushed, they fought back fearlessly, giving our Qin the opportunity to annihilate Bao Yuan's forces, a truly great merit. However, the death benefits for fallen soldiers of the Logistics Army are far lower than those for the Sharp Warriors of the main battle lines. These soldiers of the Logistics Army died because of one general's mistake, yet they fought and fell fearlessly. This servant humbly requests Your Majesty's grand favor, to extend the compensation of Sharp Warriors to these fallen soldiers of the Logistics Army, to demonstrate the Great King's magnificent grace," Yu Liao declared loudly, bowing deeply.

As soon as he finished speaking, Ying Zheng's expression was visibly moved.

"Your Majesty," a voice interjected. "The system of noble ranks must not be disrupted. Nearly ten thousand soldiers from the Logistics Army have fallen in this battle. If all are compensated at the level of Sharp Warriors, it would cause an unnecessary and significant drain on the national treasury's funds and provisions. Our great Qin's military campaign is already placing increasing daily strain on our finances. We cannot allow the system of noble ranks to fall into disorder over this."

The one who stood up was the head of the Civil Servants, the current Chancellor, Wang Wan.

"I concur."

"The system of noble ranks and the expenditures of the national treasury, if handled improperly, will be detrimental to the state."

"We ask the Great King to reconsider."

Following Wang Wan, one after another, the other Civil Servants stood up to voice their agreement.