

Longevity 291

Chapter 291: Ying Zheng: General Zhao, You'd Better Freshen Up First! (Part 3)

"Zheng'er, is the art of ruling a country found in its monarch? The way of a king is to control his ministers; have you learned these things?"

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Scenes from many years ago flashed one after another through Ying Zheng's mind.

Years have passed. Things remain, but people have changed. Mother. Dong'er. Teacher...

Ying Zheng gazed at the courtyard before him, an indescribable emotion welling up inside. Perhaps only in this place could he reveal such a vulnerable side.

Before his return to Qin, their relationship was one of a loving mother and a filial son; his mother had been willing to give up everything for him, even her own life. Before his return to Qin, his mother had still treated Dong'er like a future daughter-in-law, caring for her in every possible way.

But after returning to Qin, everything changed.

"Father-in-law, I have already given the order," Ying Zheng said, turning to Xia Wuqie. "Search the entire city. The moment there is any trace of Dong'er, report it immediately to me. Let's hope the outcome won't disappoint us."

"Indeed, let's hope so," Xia Wuqie agreed with a nod. Subsequently, he asked, "Great King, how do you plan to deal with Zhao Yan?"

"Death is too easy a fate for him," Ying Zheng said coldly. "I will make him wish he were dead. In a few days, once Handan is thoroughly purged, I will take him to my teacher's grave myself and make him give an account."

"And what about the people of the Zhao state?" Xia Wuqie asked.

"Father-in-law, after all these years, do you still not understand me?" Ying Zheng turned to look at Xia Wuqie. "If I were an ordinary man, my feud with Zhao Yan of Zhao would be a personal one. But I am a king. The Zhao state will fall, and its people will become my people. As long as they submit to Qin, I will treat them the same as the people of Qin, just as I have treated the people of Han. This is not just for the Zhao state; one day, I will treat all people of Huaxia under the heavens as one."

"I once promised Dong'er that if I became king, I would create a world without war or fratricidal strife and maintain peace for all under heaven. This, I will always remember," Ying Zheng declared with a solemn expression, as if reiterating his promise to Xia Wuqie.

Upon hearing this, Xia Wuqie bowed deeply to Ying Zheng and said, "This old servant thanks the Great King on behalf of the millions of people of Zhao."

Clearly, Xia Wuqie had been worried that Ying Zheng would target the common folk out of spite for the humiliation and resentment he had suffered in Zhao. Though he knew Ying Zheng's character, Xia Wuqie still felt compelled to offer a reminder.

"Father-in-law, there is no need for such formalities," Ying Zheng quickly stepped forward to help Xia Wuqie up.

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「In the Wounded Soldier Camp!」

Master Chen was frantic. Besides him, hundreds of military doctors throughout the camp were bustling about without a moment's rest. The entire camp was filled with wails. The battle had been too fierce. There were tens of thousands of wounded soldiers, yet there were fewer than six hundred military doctors, and that was the total number from the entire Lantian Camp.

"Chief! We've run out of hemostatic medicine! We need more supplies allocated!"

"Chief, Doctor Lin fainted from exhaustion!"

"Chief, please reassign some people! We haven't closed our eyes in days!"

"The medical supplies are nowhere near enough..."

The camp echoed not only with cries of pain but also with the urgent shouts of military doctors as they shuttled back and forth, voicing their needs.

"Quickly, report to the Shangjiangjun!" Master Chen said, though he was at his wit's end. "Have them allocate medical supplies at once! The camp's supplies for the wounded are completely insufficient!" Faced with the pleas of the military doctors, he had no other choice but to request more medicine from his superiors.

"Understood! I'll go at once!" an attendant replied, quickly hurrying away.

"Alas," Master Chen sighed. "There are too many wounded this time. It far exceeds the number our camp can treat."

"Master Chen."

Zhao Feng's voice sounded in his ear. Upon hearing it, Master Chen's face lit up with joy. "General Zhao, what brings you here?"

"The Battle of Handan is over. Naturally, I came to the Wounded Soldier Camp to see if there's anything I can help with," Zhao Feng said with a slight smile.

"You've come at the perfect time," Master Chen said helplessly. "This battle has left us with too many injured, and we simply don't have enough medical staff. Moreover, we're severely short on medical supplies."

"I can't do anything about the shortage of doctors, but I have brought medical supplies," Zhao Feng smiled and clapped his hands. At his signal, his trusted aides brought in more than a dozen carts filled with medical supplies.

"Where did these come from?" Master Chen asked, astonished.

"They were transported from the Zhao Jun's wounded soldier camp. This is only a tenth of it; the rest is being delivered in an orderly fashion," Zhao Feng explained.

"What about the Zhao Jun's wounded?" Master Chen asked, taken aback.

Zhao Feng glanced over. "My only concern is for my Pao Ze. Why should I care about enemy soldiers? Men, bring these medical supplies into the camp to be prepared."

The number of wounded soldiers from the Zhao Jun within Handan City was also countless. As for them, Zhao Feng had a simple policy. For the critically wounded beyond saving, he ordered his Sharp Warriors to grant them a swift end. He left the lightly wounded to fend for themselves.

They were the enemy, after all. It wasn't that he was cruel; this was simply the way of the world. They would not receive the same treatment as his own injured soldiers. If injured Qin soldiers fell into the hands of the Zhao Jun, they would suffer the same fate; the Zhao state would not waste its resources on them.

Seeing this, Master Chen asked no more questions. "General Zhao, your medical skills are superb. You alone are worth more than a dozen men. Today, will you be handling the knife or applying medicine?"

"The usual," Zhao Feng said. "I'll operate and suture; you clean the wounds and apply medicine."

"Very well," Master Chen immediately nodded.

The two of them then walked into the depths of the camp. One was a general, the other a doctor, but their teamwork was already impeccably synchronized.

Time passed.

Inside the Wounded Soldier Camp, the figures of Zhao Feng and Master Chen moved from patient to patient, just as they had before, treating the severely wounded soldiers with practiced cooperation.

"Treated one wounded soldier, gained one Merit Point."

"Treated one wounded soldier, gained one Merit Point."

...

As Zhao Feng treated the wounded in the camp, he continuously earned Merit Points.

「On the Yan-Zhao border!」

"Your Highness," a scout reported to Yan Dan inside the frontier military camp. "We've just received news. Handan has been breached by Qin."

Upon hearing this, Yan Dan's expression stirred, his face quickly breaking into a joyful grin.

"Shangjiangjun, our opportunity has come!" Yan Dan said excitedly.

"Your Highness, do you truly wish to mobilize the army?" Yue Cheng asked, still worried. "Once our forces enter Zhao Jing, we are very likely to encounter Qin forces, and perhaps even engage them in battle. The National Power of our Great Yan is no match for Qin."

He had consistently advised Yan Dan against this, even submitting a memorial to the King of Yan, but Yan Dan remained firm in his opinion, paying it no mind.

"Ying Zheng cannot possibly wage war on two fronts," Yan Dan said with extreme, naive confidence. "Furthermore, the Zhao state has always been an enemy of our Great Yan, so our campaign is justified. Ying Zheng cannot stop us. As for encountering the Qin army? Should that truly happen, I, the Crown Prince, am certain that Ying Zheng would not dare to fight our Great Yan."

"Very well," Yue Cheng could only nod, seeing Yan Dan's determination.

"Issue my, the Crown Prince's, order!" Yan Dan shouted with unparalleled excitement. "The Shangjiangjun will personally lead one hundred thousand troops to invade Zhao Jing! Conquer every city and annihilate every army we encounter! Seize this chance to expand the territory of our Great Yan!"

This was an opportunity not to be missed. Not only could he avenge the humiliation he suffered as a hostage in Zhao, but he could also expand Yan's territory. Success would bring him immense prestige in Yan, which would translate into even greater support upon his future ascension to the throne. Thinking of this, Yan Dan grew even more eager. As for Qin, he naively believed his invasion of Zhao would not provoke an armed conflict.

「In the state of Wei!」

In the court, a messenger ran hysterically into the great hall.

"Reporting to the Great King! We have just received a battle report from the Zhao state! The Qin army's Lantian Camp has breached Handan City! The Zhao capital has fallen! Zhao's Shangjiangjun, Pang Xuan, has fallen in battle, and the three hundred thousand troops defending Handan have been routed!"

Upon hearing this, the King of Wei's face changed drastically. The expressions of the court officials of Wei also grew complicated.

"The Zhao capital has fallen to Qin, and Pang Xuan is dead? This is terrible."

"With this, the state of Zhao is in peril."

"Two of Zhao's three great Shangjiangjuns are now dead, leaving only Li Mu."

"Can Li Mu, with the Frontier Army in Zhao's Dai Territory, truly stop the Qin army?"

"When the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold. If Zhao falls, our Great Wei is in danger."

"What should we do?"

At this moment, the faces of many Wei officials were filled with worry. They seemed to foresee the complete annihilation of Zhao and the day the Qin army would come to attack Wei. It seemed inevitable. It wasn't just them; the high-seated King of Wei felt the same. His face was pale with unease, and he turned his pleading gaze toward Wei Wuji, the chief military official.

"Uncle," the King of Wei's voice was tinged with panic. "Given the situation, what should our Great Wei do?"

Seeing this, Wei Wuji slowly stepped forward, his aged face betraying an indescribable weariness.