

Longevity 296

Chapter 296: A Private Conversation with Ying Zheng! Dragon Spring Meets Zhan Lu! (Part 2)

"And indeed, those efforts had borne fruit.

"Lian Po and Li Mu supported Zhao Yi, as did many in the Zhao court. This alienated you from them, and ultimately, you had them eliminated yourself.

"To me, Lian Po and Li Mu were both obstacles. You removed them for me, which is a great boon for my Qin.

"Hahaha..."

At this, Ying Zheng burst into laughter.

Zhao Yan, however, looked as if he had been struck by lightning; he was completely dumbfounded.

"No... impossible. It's impossible... all of my accomplishments could not have been orchestrated by you.

"Zhao Zheng... I'll kill you..."

Unable to restrain himself, Zhao Yan struggled frantically to stand and lunge at Ying Zheng, but he was held down firmly by two Imperial Guards, unable to move an inch.

Zhao Feng, who had heard everything from the beginning, was also quite surprised.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang... truly impressive, he thought. A nation's king played like a fiddle in his hands even before his accession. Even Zhao Yan's enthronement was deliberately engineered by him. Such methods are truly ingenious. No wonder he was able to unify all under Heaven. What a fascinating ancestor!

In his heart, Zhao Feng was filled with even greater admiration for Ying Zheng.

Although Ying Zheng had only revealed so much, the machinations behind the scenes must have been extensive. He had forcibly engineered things so that Zhao Yan could bypass his older brother, the official Crown Prince, and take the throne of Zhao. One could only imagine how much planning that involved.

It all made sense now.

When Zhao Yan first took the throne, he faced almost no resistance. How could he possibly have managed that with his intellect and Guo Kai's help alone?

Everything had been manipulated by Ying Zheng from behind the scenes.

"Zhao Yi has already fled to the Dai Territory. He's gained the support of the generals there, and the Zhao officials who fled with him have acclaimed him as their king.

"However, to differentiate himself from you, he hasn't claimed the title of King of Zhao. Instead, he calls himself the King of Dai and has already held his accession ceremony, taking control of the two-hundred-thousand-strong army in the Dai Territory.

"Speaking of which, his claim is indeed legitimate.

"It's a far more legitimate claim than your own usurped position," Ying Zheng continued, his tone still laced with mockery.

As long as he could cause Zhao Yan pain, Ying Zheng was happy. Even as an emperor for the ages, he was still a man with a human heart and human feelings. He could not be entirely rational.

To see his enemy before him and not torment him would make him a true Holy Mother.

"Zhao Zheng... kill me.

"Kill me.

"I refuse to accept this! I refuse to accept this fate!"

Zhao Yan screamed madly, his spirit now utterly shattered. Ying Zheng's words had destroyed his final defenses; his greatest pride, his seizure of the throne, had been exposed as a joke.

It had all been a manipulation by Ying Zheng.

"I said I would not kill you, and I will not," Ying Zheng stated calmly. "Take him away and guard him closely. Do not let him die."

With a wave of Ying Zheng's hand, several Imperial Guards immediately hoisted Zhao Yan up and removed him from the area.

"Teacher.

"Do you see?

"Your disciple has fully mastered what you taught me.

"Royal authority, political maneuvering.

"Your disciple will use what you taught to unite all under Heaven. Once the land is unified, I will posthumously confer upon you the title of Great Qin Master and ensure the entire world knows your name, Teacher," Ying Zheng said to the grave before him, his voice filled with promise.

Afterward, he turned his head.

His gaze passed over Wang Jian, swept over Wang Ben, and finally settled on Zhao Feng.

"General Zhao, would you accompany me for a walk?" Ying Zheng asked with a slight smile.

"As you command." How could Zhao Feng refuse?

Ying Zheng immediately began to walk leisurely to one side, and Zhao Feng quickly fell into step behind him. They walked one after the other, heading toward a spot further up the mountain.

Wang Jian and Wang Ben remained where they were, their gazes fixed on the two departing figures.

At that moment, Wang Ben's face lit up with surprise and a hint of a smile, as if he had just realized something. "Father."

"If you have something to say, spit it out," Wang Jian replied irritably, his usual tone with his son.

"Father. Don't you think Zhao Feng bears a striking resemblance to the Great King? Look at his profile—doesn't it look just like the Great King's?" Wang Ben asked in a half-joking manner.

Hearing this, Wang Jian spun around and glared fiercely at Wang Ben. "Have you lost your mind? How dare you spread rumors about the Great King? Are you trying to get yourself killed?!"

At his father's words, Wang Ben immediately fell silent. He had only spoken on a whim, intending it as a joke.

Despite himself, Wang Jian couldn't help but look over. From where he and his son stood, they could only see the profiles of Ying Zheng and Zhao Feng. Their heights were similar, and now that Wang Ben had mentioned it, he studied their faces.

Now that I look closely, they really do look alike, he thought. If they were walking down the street, people would surely mistake them for father and son.

Wang Jian thought to himself, but unlike his foolish son, he kept the observation to himself.

Jokes aside, Wang Jian naturally understood that it was merely a coincidence.

Zhao Feng was a commoner by birth, as far removed from the Royal Family as one could possibly be. It was merely a coincidence, something anyone could reason out. After all, if a royal descendant was lost to the common folk, without an entry in the Jade Butterfly register, they would have no official royal status. Moreover, the current Great King had returned to Qin at the age of ten and had resided in

Xianyang ever since. It was impossible for him to have had any encounters outside the capital, let alone father a child.

「Up the mountain!」

Ying Zheng led the way with Zhao Feng following, both walking at a slow pace.

They walked together for some time, yet neither of them spoke.

In truth, Zhao Feng's heart was pounding. Why does the King of Qin want to see me alone? he wondered. Could it be for something good?