

Longevity 297

Chapter 297: A Private Conversation with Ying Zheng! Dragon Spring Meets Zhan Lu! (Part 3)

At that moment, Ying Zheng suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"Do you not have something to say to me?" Ying Zheng turned his head, a slight smile on his face.

"This..." Zhao Feng trailed off, feeling somewhat awkward.

Although he greatly respected Emperor Qin Shi Huang and could now be said to have successfully "met his idol," actually facing this charismatic ancestor left him at a loss for words. After all, this was a king. It was impossible to act as casually as one would with brothers and friends.

Seeing this, Ying Zheng smiled faintly. His gaze swept around before he casually chose a spot and sat down, waving at Zhao Feng.

"Sit," Ying Zheng said with a smile.

"The Great King may sit; this servant will stand," Zhao Feng replied, still mindful of his etiquette.

"When I tell you to sit, you sit," Ying Zheng glared.

There was no other choice. Zhao Feng sat down beside Ying Zheng.

Seeing this, Ying Zheng smiled with satisfaction. "I have long heard that you are a man of strong emotions."

"In every battle, you charge ahead of your soldiers."

"Is that not so?"

Zhao Feng nodded. "That is so."

"A general's first duty is to command the army. Rushing ahead of your soldiers is foolish. If the commander falls, the entire army can collapse. Are you not aware of this?" Ying Zheng asked, his tone carrying a hint of reprimand.

"Replying to the Great King," Zhao Feng began, "this is where my method of command differs from others."

"When this servant leads, we either take the city or fight to the last man. There is no talk of retreat."

"Under my command, the troops have sky-high morale, and their combat strength far surpasses that of other armies."

"By leading from the front, I can inspire the troops and boost their morale. The capture of Handan is a perfect example of this," Zhao Feng replied frankly.

Leading from the front... If he didn't possess such strength, Zhao Feng might worry. But now, with his explosive strength across all his attributes, he had the confidence to do so.

"Have you considered your own safety? I have millions of soldiers, but only a handful of capable commanders. And you," Ying Zheng said meaningfully, patting Zhao Feng's shoulder, "are one of them."

Hearing this, Zhao Feng immediately smiled. "This servant cherishes his life very much."

"I enlisted at sixteen, and in the three years since, I've almost reached the age of twenty. I have a mother at home to care for and a sister who is not yet married. What's more, though I am not yet wed, I already have a son and a daughter."

"If I were to die, what would become of them?"

"Therefore, this servant will live on until the Great Qin unifies the world. Then, I shall go south to conquer the Baiyue for the Great King and guard the Southern Border."

The first part was Zhao Feng's heartfelt truth, and the last sentence could also be considered sincere. However, that last sentence also revealed Zhao Feng's ulterior motives.

He knew history and understood that this period was difficult to change. Emperor Qin Shi Huang was a once-in-a-millennium ruler, but he was ultimately a mortal with a finite lifespan. His sons were destined not to carry the weight of the vast Qin empire. If events followed history and Hu Hai succeeded to the throne, Qin would fall. Even if Fusu took over, his capabilities wouldn't be enough to stabilize the empire for long. In short, the end of Qin was inevitable. Naturally, Zhao Feng had to plan ahead for himself and his future. Conquering the Baiyue and guarding the Southern Border was the path he chose for himself. The historical Zhao Tuo could only secure a corner of the land for himself, but Zhao Feng intended to vie for dominance over the Central Plains. By that time, Yanting would have spread throughout the lands, giving him control over all intelligence. He would command hundreds of thousands of elite troops, and eradicating the remnants of the Six States would be an easy task.

"Good. I will await the day you help me unite the world and conquer the Baiyue. As for guarding the Southern Border, if that day truly comes, assigning you to such a post would be a waste of your talents," Ying Zheng laughed heartily.

There was a double meaning in his words, clearly indicating his greater expectations for Zhao Feng.

"Do you still remember the two Wanjiangs from Wei City who retreated in the midst of battle?" Ying Zheng suddenly asked.

"Weren't they already escorted back to Xianyang? Beyond that, this servant knows nothing," Zhao Feng replied honestly.

Chen Tao and Zhao Tuo... They would never have the chance to be generals again. And from Ying Zheng's words, it was clear he was aware of the situation and would personally see to it. Even if those two had powerful backers, they could not reverse their fate.

"I personally investigated this matter," Ying Zheng stated.

"Retreating from battle and compromising the outcome... They nearly caused the fall of Wei City. Such a crime cannot be lightly forgiven."

"I have already instructed the Tingwei to handle them. Their peerages will be revoked, their military posts stripped, and they will be thrown into the imperial prison to await a chosen day for execution!" Ying Zheng said with a laugh, then looked at Zhao Feng. "Does that sate your anger?"

"The Great King has misspoken," Zhao Feng immediately replied.

"It is not just my anger, but the righteous indignation of all the soldiers who defended Wei City that has been sated."

The actions of Zhao Tuo and Chen Tao that day had spread throughout the army, earning them universal scorn. Countless soldiers had been calling for their deaths.

"Indeed," Ying Zheng nodded.

After a moment, Ying Zheng asked with renewed interest, "I have heard that you alone, with your sword, broke through city gates, including those of Wu'an and Handan. How did you manage that?"

Ying Zheng had become curious after seeing the fragments of Handan's city gate, and now he had the opportunity to ask in person.

"This servant happened upon a divine weapon. Coupled with strength that far exceeds an ordinary person's, I was able to accomplish it," Zhao Feng replied with a smile.

This was half-truth, half-lie. The divine weapon was part of it, but the key was Zhao Feng's own immense strength and the support of his True Qi.

Hearing this, Ying Zheng unceremoniously drew the Zhan Lu Sword from his waist and tossed it to Zhao Feng.

Zhao Feng subconsciously grasped the hilt, looking at Ying Zheng with confusion.

"Try clashing your sword against mine," Ying Zheng said with a smile.

Zhao Feng smiled. "Great King, you should probably take this back. If your sword were to be damaged, this servant could never bear the responsibility."

Hearing this, Ying Zheng couldn't help but burst out laughing. "Hahaha! The Zhan Lu Sword is ranked among the top ten in the world and is even considered the number one divine weapon in circulation today. Yet you say your sword might damage my Zhan Lu Sword?"

"Zhao Feng, oh Zhao Feng."

"If those words were to get out, you would be a laughingstock."

At this, Zhao Feng saw no need for further words. He drew the Longquan Sword from his waist and presented it to Ying Zheng, along with the Zhan Lu Sword in his other hand.

"It would be best if the Great King tested them himself," Zhao Feng said with a smile.

"It seems you are quite confident in your divine weapon. In that case, let me see for myself," Ying Zheng said, his curiosity piqued by Zhao Feng's confident demeanor.

"But if your sword is damaged by my Zhan Lu, you mustn't be angry," he added with a chuckle.

"If it is damaged, this servant will not be angry," Zhao Feng replied with equal confidence.

"Then watch carefully," Ying Zheng smiled.

He grasped one sword in each hand.

Then, he swung them, clashing them together forcefully.

BANG!

The clash of steel struck sparks into the air.

Ying Zheng slowly parted the blades. Zhao Feng's expression remained calm, but Ying Zheng stared intently at the swords, his expression turning strange.

"Which master smith forged this sword for you?"

"It withstood a strike from my Zhan Lu without a scratch? The two swords are on par with each other?"

"It seems the divine weapon you acquired by chance is not weak at all," Ying Zheng said in surprise.

Zhao Feng also looked and showed a hint of surprise. "Indeed, Great King, your Zhan Lu Sword is truly a divine weapon of the highest caliber to be as sharp as my own sword."

This truly was beyond his expectations. He had assumed the Zhan Lu Sword was an ordinary blade that would surely chip or break when struck by his Mysterious Order Longquan Sword. Yet the reality was astonishing: the Zhan Lu and the Longquan were evenly matched.

"You actually look surprised?" Ying Zheng said, unable to hold back his laughter.

He examined the Longquan Sword closely, then tossed it back to Zhao Feng.

"It is indeed a superior divine weapon," Ying Zheng commented.

"What is this sword called?" he asked.

Zhao Feng caught the sword and sheathed it. "This servant found this sword beneath a clear spring waterfall in Yingchuan County. As I took it, I faintly heard what sounded like a dragon's roar, and so I named it Longquan."

"The Longquan Sword. A fine name," Ying Zheng nodded appreciatively, then looked at Zhao Feng with a smile. "The Zhan Lu Sword became renowned throughout the world through my ancestors, the former kings of Qin, and all know it as the King of Qin's blade. It is my hope that this Longquan Sword will become famous because of you, Zhao Feng, so that the entire world will know Longquan as your sword."

Hearing these words filled with immense expectation, Zhao Feng replied with deep sincerity, "This servant will do his utmost."

"Alright, sit," Ying Zheng smiled, settling back down.

After their exchange, seeing Ying Zheng's amiable and pleasant demeanor, Zhao Feng realized the king was far more approachable than he had imagined. He was not the stern, domineering, and otherworldly figure of legend.

Consequently, Zhao Feng also relaxed his guard.

"The state of Yan has mobilized its forces," Ying Zheng stated.

"They have crossed the Yan-Zhao border and have already seized numerous cities from the Zhao state."

"What do you think should be done?" he asked with a smile.

"What else is there to do?" Zhao Feng said with a faint smile. "They are snatching meat from our mouths. We will make them spit out every last bite."

Ying Zheng laughed. "Hahaha! Zhao Feng, you are truly a man after my own heart."