

Longevity 299

Chapter 299: Ying Zheng's Promise! (Part 2)

"Sigh. Dong'er, it seems I miss you too much."

A long while later, Ying Zheng sighed again. That fleeting glance, so similar to the one from the person he held dear, had startled him.

「He returned to the tomb!」

"Zhao Feng is back." Wang Ben noticed Zhao Feng at first glance.

"What important matter did the Great King have to discuss with you alone?" Wang Jian immediately asked. He thought it must be something important that Ying Zheng wanted to convey to Zhao Feng.

"We just had a chat; he didn't entrust me with anything," Zhao Feng replied with a smile. "He also tried my sword out."

"Brother-in-law, to be able to spend so much time alone with the Great King is the highest honor," Wang Ben said, his voice tinged with jealousy. "I'm so envious."

"That's enough to make you envious, brother?" Zhao Feng teased with a chuckle.

"Your brother is unambitious; pay him no mind," Wang Jian said with a laugh, then continued, "Did the Great King give any other instructions?"

"The Great King wished to be alone on the mountain and told us to go back first," Zhao Feng explained.

"Hmm," Wang Jian nodded.

"Mr. Zhao," Wang Jian suddenly said to Zhao Feng in a meaningful tone, "During this period, you must achieve more military merits."

"Father," Wang Ben interjected, "aren't the military merits my brother-in-law has earned already enough? He breached Wu'an City, took Handan, slew Pang Xuan, and captured the King of Zhao. In the entire Lantian Camp, who can compare to him?" Wang Ben's eyes were filled with undeniable envy.

"Your brother-in-law earned his military merits fair and square," Wang Jian scolded, causing Wang Ben to hang his head in silence. "During the attack on Handan, you and Yang Duanhe were frightened out of your wits. If it weren't for your brother-in-law stepping forward, I'm afraid Handan City would still be unconquered."

Wang Jian's expression turned serious. "When the Great King first arrived at Handan, he shared some news with me. The Great King intends for you to advance further."

At this, Wang Ben's face changed, and his eyes widened. "Brother-in-law is already a Main General, and his noble rank is at the twelfth level, one higher than mine. If he advances further, wouldn't he become a Protector-General?"

Even Wang Ben was astonished. It was simply unimaginable.

A nineteen-year-old Protector-General? No. By the time Zhao state was truly conquered and returned to Qin, Zhao Feng would be twenty at most.

A twenty-year-old Protector-General? Who in the entire world could achieve that? This was not a civil post, but a military command earned through battlefield achievements—a much harder path to promotion.

"In any case," Wang Jian said solemnly, "it is a good thing that the Great King holds you in such high regard. You must not betray his trust. Now that Zhao state has not yet fallen, you must secure more military merits to solidify this position. Then, when the Great King truly proposes your promotion, there will be less opposition in the court."

"Father-in-law, rest assured. I understand," Zhao Feng nodded.

What he had heard from Ying Zheng earlier was merely implicit, but hearing it from Wang Jian now made it seem almost certain. He just had to wait for the fall of Zhao and its return to Qin. Then, Zhao Feng would have a great chance to ascend to the position of Protector-General—in other words, the rank of Senior General.

A Senior General in command of an entire camp. This was a position on par with Wang Jian himself.

"If brother-in-law truly becomes a Senior General, our Wang Family's position in the Great Qin's court will be even higher," Wang Ben said, his tone now earnest.

"The higher the position, the greater the jealousy it invites, and the more one becomes a target," Wang Jian said with a grave expression. "One wrong step could lead to utter ruin." As a man of high standing, he was exceedingly cautious.

"Father-in-law, you need not worry so much," Zhao Feng said with a light smile. "The royal authority is supreme. The Great King is a man of great talent and strategy; he won't be easily manipulated by villains. As for the future, we'll take it one step at a time. There's no need for such undue concern."

For now, I am an ally, relying on Great Qin's National Fortune to grow stronger. As for the successors of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, I have nothing to worry about. If they want to suppress me, let them. I plan to go to the Southern Border eventually anyway. If they don't, I will simply bide my time until the End of Qin. All in all, I shall watch the world's storms gather from a distance and solidify my own longevity amidst them.

「Return to Handan City!」

Upon his return, Zhao Feng immediately threw himself into the Wounded Soldier Camp. He naturally didn't want to miss the opportunity to acquire Merit Points and heal his Pao Ze brothers.

Time flew by. Ten days passed.

Inside Handan City, the Qin Army was now in complete control. The order disrupted by the war was gradually being restored.

In the Wounded Soldier Camp, the initial cries of agony had subsided. Although many soldiers still cried out in pain from having their bandages changed, the situation was a vast improvement compared to ten days prior.

"All who could be saved have been saved," Master Chen said with a smile. "Nearly thirty thousand men entered the Wounded Soldier Camp this time. Light wounds were treated by attendants changing dressings, while those with grave wounds were moved here. The survival rate was over seventy percent. That's already quite remarkable."

"Have the rosters for the disabled been compiled?" Zhao Feng asked.

"They have all been compiled and submitted to the Military Judge," Master Chen nodded.

The army had its own rules. Disabled Sharp Warriors would be discharged from service. To prevent those with ulterior motives from leaving, a discharge required certification by a military doctor of the Wounded Soldier Camp.

Moreover, those with noble ranks who were discharged due to disability had two options: receive a larger annual salary as compensation, or be assigned a minor post in their home province. This rule was changed after King Ying Zheng of Qin began his personal rule, as a grace bestowed upon the meritorious Sharp Warriors of Great Qin.