

Longevity 30

Chapter 30: Truly, Heroes Arise from Youth!

"Chancellor Wang!"

"If these brave soldiers who died in battle are treated poorly because of national treasury expenses, it will dishearten the entire army," Yu Liao said, turning to Wang Wan.

"The system of nobility is what it is; the system for the Logistics Army and the regular army is what it is," Wang Wan stated, his tone unwavering. "If everything can be changed, then how can we enforce discipline with regulations in the future?"

Yu Liao gave a faint smile. "Regulations should indeed take precedence, but the men of the Logistics Army are also soldiers. Their original duty was to handle supplies, yet they went to the battlefield. They died for the state, and they deserve a share of the pension for fallen Sharp Warriors. The might of Great Qin relies on the sharpness of its arms and the morale of its soldiers."

His voice trailed off.

"It might be feasible in terms of sentiment, but it is impossible under the laws of the state." Wang Wan was unmoved. "As the one in charge of military merit and punishment, Commander Wei, you should be aware of this. Furthermore, you must know that mobilizing troops is a great drain on Qin's national power."

But just then, Ying Zheng spoke up. "Enough!"

"Your Majesty!" Wang Wan and Yu Liao bowed respectfully.

"The laws and regulations of the state cannot be flagrantly violated, but the soldiers who died for the state must not be treated poorly. Grant them a pension equal to half of that for ennobled Sharp Warriors who have fallen. This can be considered the explanation I owe them," Ying Zheng said slowly.

Though his words seemed casual, the decision was final.

"Your Majesty is wise," Yu Liao immediately bowed, his face beaming with joy.

Wang Wan, however, remained silent.

"Chancellor, did you hear me clearly?" Ying Zheng frowned, his gaze fixed on Wang Wan.

Facing Ying Zheng's authority, Wang Wan could only bow. "This old servant understands."

"Good. If the ministers have nothing more to report, court is dismissed. Doctor Xia, join me in Zhangtai Palace," Ying Zheng said, standing and waving his hand.

With that, Ying Zheng turned and left the great hall.

"We respectfully see Your Majesty off." The ministers chanted in unison.

After Ying Zheng had departed, Wang Wan walked over to Yu Liao and snorted coldly, clearly dissatisfied. "Commander Wei. You don't know the price of rice and firewood when you aren't the one managing the house. Qin has been at war with Han for three months. Do you have any idea how many provisions our army of 300,000 consumes each day?"

"Though I do not manage the house, I am aware of Qin's national power," Yu Liao scoffed. "Destroying Han may consume some of our strength, but it is far from the great loss you speak of. After all these years, has the current Chancellor already expended all the grain and supplies accumulated by the former Chancellor? Or is it that the current one is inferior to his predecessor?" With a sweep of his sleeve, he turned and left.

At this barb from Yu Liao, Wang Wan's face turned ashen, but he ultimately restrained himself.

Perhaps this was the clash between the old nobility and the new, simmering beneath the ostensibly peaceful and united court of the Great Qin Dynasty. Since Ying Zheng began to rule in his own right, Qin had undergone great changes. The court was originally dominated by the imperial clan and Qin's old nobility, but Ying Zheng adhered to the principle of using talent wherever he found it, unbound by convention. He sought out the worthy from all under Heaven, employing even guests from other states. Now, the Great Qin Dynasty Court had effectively split into two factions. The old nobility and the new gentry were entangled in a web of conflicting interests and a struggle for power that made them adversaries.

Ying Zheng, of course, saw it all. He did not intervene. This was the nature of royal authority—to skillfully manage one's ministers.

「Zhangtai Palace!」

The sleeping quarters of past Kings of Qin.

"Doctor Xia has arrived," Zhao Gao announced from outside the hall.

Xia Wuqie strode into the palace. As he entered, Ying Zheng, who was waiting inside, waved a hand. Zhao Gao immediately bowed, nodded, and slowly closed the palace doors.

"Father-in-law," Ying Zheng called out warmly.

"Your Majesty," Xia Wuqie replied with a bow.

"The last time I saw you was a month ago. Father-in-law, do you truly dislike seeing me so much?" Ying Zheng asked with a hint of helplessness.

"Your Majesty is overthinking things," Xia Wuqie replied with a smile. "You know this old servant's character. I have always disliked the court, and the royal palace even more. My true wish is to devote myself to the study of medicine."

Hearing this, Ying Zheng merely smiled faintly, a touch of melancholy in his expression. "If you can, Father-in-law, please come to the palace more often. In recent years, I have had no one by my side in whom I can truly confide."

"Alright," Xia Wuqie said simply, giving a firm nod.

Seeing this, the smile on Ying Zheng's face deepened. "How many people know about the new medical techniques in the Military Medical Camp?" he asked.

"That Zhao Feng taught the suturing technique and the heat disinfection method to Master Chen, and my disciple then passed them on to the numerous military doctors," Xia Wuqie explained.

"For such medical arts to reduce the casualties in our army so significantly... it is truly unprecedented," Ying Zheng remarked with emotion.

"If it were not so, this old servant would never have requested recognition from Your Majesty on his behalf. And did the young man make any demands when he taught these techniques?"

"My disciple had only one thing to say about him: 'A healer must have a compassionate heart,'" Xia Wuqie said with a chuckle.

"Father-in-law, you must be thinking of taking him as your disciple," Ying Zheng said with a knowing smile.

"Indeed! I once thought my own medical skills had reached their pinnacle, but it seems there is always someone better. Master Chen said the boy's medical skills are not yet exceptional, but he possesses a

unique insight into the path of medicine. With proper guidance, he will surely become a great physician," Xia Wuqie asserted confidently.

At these words, Ying Zheng felt a pang of guilt. "This young man is incredibly brave. Wang Jian himself submitted a report requesting an assignment for him. It would be a waste of his talents to use him merely as a military doctor. It is rare for you to ask for something, Father-in-law, yet this time I cannot grant your wish."

"Your Majesty speaks too seriously," Xia Wuqie said with a smile. "Compared to a valiant general, cultivating one great physician is of little consequence."

"Father-in-law, I have now embarked on the quest to unify the world. The conquest of Han is but the first step. The second will be Zhao. Soon, I will see that your wish is granted," Ying Zheng assured Xia Wuqie, his gaze full of promise.

「Yang City, Prefecture Governor's office!」

"Reporting to General Li," Wang Yan said, leading Zhao Feng into the hall and saluting. "Zhao Feng, the Logistics Army squad leader, has arrived."

"Greetings, General Li." Zhao Feng immediately bowed, cupping one fist in his other hand.

An ordinary soldier of the Logistics Army without a noble rank would have had to kneel before a superior officer. But now that Zhao Feng held a rank of nobility, even in the presence of the King of Qin, a simple bow was sufficient.

Li Teng looked up at Zhao Feng. After a moment of scrutiny, he smiled. "I never imagined you would be so young. Truly, heroes emerge from the young."

In history, the conquest of Han was led by Neishi Teng under Emperor Qin Shi Huang. This man is named Li Teng... could he later become Neishi? To me, the man standing before me is a living figure from the history books. He's also a figure recorded in the annals of history. Thinking about it, this is the first truly famous historical figure I've ever met. What about Bao Yuan? He probably doesn't count. After all, I beheaded him in our first and only encounter.

"General Li flatters me," Zhao Feng replied promptly, with neither humility nor arrogance.