

Longevity 313

Chapter 313: Great Victory for Qin, Old Qin People Excited and Thrilled!

Any king with a trace of courage, even if the lands of the Six States were lost, would find the hot-blooded Old Qin People and their bloodline ready to help him carve out a new world. But what about Hu Hai? He was not only harsh toward the Six States, but also toward the Old Qin People. Their hearts had been lost.

But to return to the matter at hand, a messenger galloped all the way, quickly arriving within the Royal Palace. With the command flag at his side, he met no obstacles and reached the outside of the Morning Discussion Hall.

"Great King," the messenger bowed and loudly reported, "there is a great victory over the Zhao state! Dai City has fallen, and the Dai Territory has been completely conquered by Qin. The Zhao state is no more! Qin has vanquished the Zhao state! A grand victory!"

Upon hearing this, the entire court was startled. All the Great Qin Court Officials were initially shocked, but then wild joy appeared on each of their faces.

"Your subjects offer our congratulations to the Great King!" the civil and military officials chorused, bowing to Ying Zheng in unison. "Long live the Great King, long live Qin!"

From his high throne, Ying Zheng's expression revealed deep emotion. He slowly stood up, joy on his face, yet he still retained his dignity and solemnity. Under the court's felicitations, Ying Zheng spread his arms wide, exuding an unrivaled imperial aura. "Heavenly Destiny lies with Qin!"

"Heavenly Destiny lies with Qin!" the officials roared in response. "Qin will surely unify all under heaven! Long live the Great King, long live Qin!"

Ying Zheng commanded authoritatively, "Announce my decree. All nobles from the Zhao state captured as prisoners shall be brought back to Qin. All those ministers and their entire families shall be taken to Qin. All shall be demoted to slavery and branded with the slave mark. Upon their return, the Tingwei will catalog them, and all the slaves will be bestowed upon deserving officials."

"The Great King is wise!" the court officials exclaimed excitedly.

The conquest of Zhao had taxed Qin's National Power, but all officials had contributed. Everyone serving at court was likely to receive a reward, as had always been the custom. After the conquest of Han, many court officials had also received rewards from Ying Zheng.

"Great King," Wang Wan stepped forward and reported, "this campaign against Zhao has resulted in no small number of surrendered troops. Their daily consumption of food and fodder is significant, and we must deliberate on a disposition strategy."

"Shaofu," Ying Zheng turned to look at Yu Liao, "how many surrendered soldiers are in the Zhao Territory now?"

"Great King," Yu Liao respectfully responded, "if we include the Prefecture Soldiers of Zhao, the total number of surrendered troops in the Zhao Territory could be close to four hundred thousand. This does not even include the deserters who fled from the Zhao Jun."

"Four hundred thousand is indeed quite a lot," Ying Zheng said gravely.

"Great King," Wang Wan respectfully proposed, "this old subject thinks we can adopt the previous method for a portion of the surrendered troops: send them to the Northern Frontier as slaves and distribute them as slaves throughout Qin."

"I concur," Huai Zhuang followed up promptly. "If all these captives are reorganized, the expense will be too great. They should be screened before being reorganized."

"What do you think, Tingwei?" Ying Zheng looked toward Li Si.

"The classifications for the Daqin Elite Soldiers are strict," Li Si immediately replied. "It takes several assessments before one can become a Sharp Warrior and earn a title. However, the soldiers from other nations have not undergone such strict evaluations, and their quality varies greatly. Indeed, they must be screened before being reorganized into the Penal Battalion."

Although he did not get along with Wang Wan and the others, this matter concerned the foundation of the state, so Li Si naturally wouldn't be vague about it. Perhaps this was also why Ying Zheng trusted him; Li Si was always serious when it came to state affairs.

"Since you all have said as much," Ying Zheng began, "we must indeed be cautious in dealing with so many surrendered troops. Send my decree to General Wang Jian. Instruct him to select the able-bodied and elite young men from among the surrendered troops, using the standards for Qin's new soldiers. Those who do not qualify shall be demoted to slavery and sent to the Northern Frontier and the Shu Region."

"The Great King is wise!" the courtiers cried in unison.

Ying Zheng raised his hand. "The Zhao state is no more. In addition to screening and reorganizing the surrendered soldiers, we also need capable officials to govern the Zhao Territory."

"Great King," Han Fei stepped forward to propose, "it has been over two years since Yingchuan County was brought under Qin's control, and it is now fully compliant. However, governing such a vast area as a single county is too cumbersome. I suggest we divide it. The former Han Land, for example, could be divided into three counties for governance."

"You have mentioned this before," Ying Zheng said to Han Fei. "Let us proceed as you have suggested. Divide Yingchuan into three counties. You shall personally oversee the details of the division."

"I accept the edict and will faithfully carry out this royal decree," Han Fei responded at once.

"Great King," Wang Wan immediately stepped forward again, "I recommend Mi Li and Men Shu be sent to govern the Zhao Territory. They are surely capable of this important task."

"I recommend the esteemed Yao Jia for this duty," Li Si also promptly stepped forward.

At this moment, Han Fei did not hold back, stepping forward himself. "Since entering Qin to serve the Great King, I have managed many affairs for the state, but these are not enough to repay the Great King's grace. I wish to volunteer to go and govern the Zhao Territory. I ask for the Great King's permission."

Upon hearing Han Fei's words, both Wang Wan and Li Si turned to look at him, clearly not expecting him to enter the fray. It was not just them; even Ying Zheng was quite surprised. Although Han Fei had entered Qin's service, he had always maintained a leisurely approach, never doing more or less than required. He always completed his assigned duties without vying for anything more. But everyone in the court knew of Han Fei's great talents. He could not only manage the affairs of his position as Secretary but could also easily handle those of the Nine Ministers.

However, without achievements, it was impossible for him to advance further. Military Commanders vie for military merits; Civil Servants vie for administrative achievements. This has been true in every era.

"The Secretary is highly talented," Ying Zheng said. "Since you have volunteered, I trust you are fully capable of governing the Zhao Territory. However, the Zhao Territory is vast, with a population of tens of millions. It would be quite a burden for one person to govern alone."