

## Longevity 331

### Chapter 331: The Emperor Welcomes in Person! (Part 2)

Huan Yi smiled, not intimidated in the slightest. "Even if you fight me for it, I won't yield."

"Your Lantian Camp has already annihilated two states. You even contributed and earned merit in the destruction of Zhao's Northern Frontier this time, while I could only watch from the sidelines. Next time, our forces must take the lead."

Though his words were spoken like a joke, one could hear the determination in Huan Yi's tone.

"Rest assured," Wang Jian smiled, not taking it to heart. "I won't compete with you."

The imperial court appeared to be the center of Qin's power, but the struggles there were even more vicious than on the battlefield. Men could appear to be the best of friends, yet turn on each other in an instant for personal gain. Looking at the seemingly friendly dynamic between Wang Jian, Meng Wu, and Huan Yi, it was clear their camaraderie was not particularly deep.

There were two reasons for this. First, the king was wary. His greatest fear was that generals with military authority would form their own factions. Second, their interests were in direct competition.

Currently, Qin had three Protector-Generals, but the position of Grand Commandant was still vacant, and no one had yet been ennobled as a titled lord. This was, of course, the goal all three of them pursued, and they would certainly compete to the very end to achieve it.

The reason Wang Jian didn't contend for it this time was because his forces had already been credited with the conquest of two states. With such merit, he was already in the lead.

"After this is all over," Meng Wu suddenly said, "we should be able to attend your son's wedding feast, shouldn't we?"

"The wedding should be very soon," Wang Jian laughed heartily. "When the time comes, you both must come to my estate and drink to your hearts' content."

"Your son is marrying a princess, so the pageantry will surely be grand. But the wine must be the absolute best, like the kind from the Immortals' Liquor House," Huan Yi said.

"You also know of the Immortals' Liquor House?" Wang Jian asked, slightly surprised.

"Although the Immortals' Liquor House was established in Yingchuan, many merchants are selling its fine wines. How could we not have had a taste? After trying the wine from the Immortals' Liquor House, I truly can't drink anything else. Not even the imperial wine from the palace can compare," Meng Wu said with a sigh.

That Zhao Feng's Immortals' Liquor House could have such an effect on these high-ranking Shangjiangjuns was a testament to its profound influence.

"I have some good news for you," Wang Jian said cheerfully. "In a few days, the Immortals' Liquor House will be opening a branch in Xianyang City."

"How do you know that?" Meng Wu and Huan Yi asked in astonishment, their eyes gleaming.

"The steward of my estate often buys wine for me and has naturally gotten to know some of the merchants. That's how I heard the news," Wang Jian said with a laugh.

The imperial carriage advanced with the Hundred Officials following in its wake. The procession was not as solemn as one might imagine; officials who were acquainted with one another conversed along the way.

「Soon, they arrived at the city gate.」

The imperial carriage came to a halt. The Hundred Officials also stopped, taking their positions behind the carriage. Since the sovereign was personally present for the welcome, the officials naturally had no reason not to attend. Perhaps an occasion this grand also required witnesses.

"Great King," Ren Xiao said respectfully, "we may have arrived too early. An hour ago, the Imperial Guards reported that General Zhao was still some distance from Xianyang. I'm afraid we will have to wait here for some time."

"We are here to welcome a meritorious hero of Qin," Ying Zheng replied with a slight smile. "I can afford to wait."

"I understand," Ren Xiao said at once, saying no more. A look of envy was visible in his eyes. To be treated with such grace by the sovereign was the highest honor for any subject. Moreover, this was no ordinary favor. The King of Qin personally leaving the city to greet him, with the Hundred Officials in tow—what an incredible honor!

Time trickled by. Soon, the time it takes for an incense stick to burn had passed.

In the distance, less than a kilometer from Xianyang City, Zhang Ming stared ahead in shock. "My Lord, why are so many people gathered outside the city?"

"Could they be here to welcome you, My Lord?" one of the trusted aide centurions joked.

"The capital is welcoming our Lord? Surely not? And look at all the common folk. Did they all come out on their own to welcome you, My Lord? Has our Lord's fame already spread to Xianyang?" Zhang Ming said with deep admiration.

Zhao Feng gazed toward the city. With attributes hundreds of times greater than an ordinary person's, he could see for several miles across any open terrain.

The imperial carriage is stopped just outside the city... Can it be that the King of Qin himself is here to welcome me at the gates? Zhao Feng was slightly stunned.

"Pick up the pace," Zhao Feng instructed. "The Great King is waiting for us at the city gate. We must not be impolite." He then spurred his horse and charged toward Xianyang City.

Upon hearing this, the trusted aides exchanged glances, their faces filled with astonishment. The Great King is personally welcoming him at the city gates! What an unparalleled honor! With this thought, every one of the trusted aides surged with excitement, following Zhao Feng toward Xianyang City. This was their lord's glory, but it was also their own.

Soon, Zhao Feng and his retinue of trusted aides were rapidly approaching Xianyang City. When he was within twenty zhang of the city gate, Zhao Feng immediately dismounted. The trusted aides behind him did the same.

"Great King, General Zhao has returned," Ren Xiao announced respectfully, then pulled back the curtain of the imperial carriage.

Ying Zheng, dressed in his King's robe, slowly descended from the carriage. A smile graced his features as he watched the approaching Zhao Feng.

It really is the King of Qin, welcoming me personally with all the officials. This is too great an honor.

Looking at Ying Zheng waiting before the imperial carriage, and then at the Hundred Officials waiting behind it, even Zhao Feng couldn't help but feel a surge of emotion. No wonder it is said that if the Heavenly Son descends the steps to greet a subject, that subject could not repay the honor even with a hundred deaths. For the king to lead the Hundred Officials out of the city as a welcoming party was an honor even greater than that.

With this in mind, Zhao Feng composed himself, strode forward, and bowed deeply to Ying Zheng. "Your servant pays his respects to the Great King."

"General Zhao Feng, you are indeed as young as the rumors say."