

Longevity 335

Chapter 335: Zhao Feng Appointed as Protector-General! A Great Joy! (Part 2)

"Disregarding the law, colluding with one another, and oppressing the common people shall all be met with severe punishment. Should any Ministers within the court be involved, they will not be spared," Ying Zheng declared, looking down upon the court with a stern command.

The matter of the Annual Salaries was of fundamental importance to the million Sharp Warriors; it was the very foundation of Qin. Ying Zheng would never allow corrupt officials to undermine the foundation of the state. This time, he was truly enraged.

"Your servant accepts the edict," Yu Liao and Li Si immediately replied.

At this moment, panic began to stir in the hearts of many officials in the court. Since ancient times, it has been said that water too clear will have no fish. In any nation, corrupt officials inevitably exist, for it is human nature. Not everyone can be a Saint. This time, the King of Qin's furious decree to investigate would undoubtedly unearth officials who had perverted justice for personal gain and embezzled the Annual Salaries.

"Alright," Ying Zheng said with a wave of his hand, not wishing to let Bai Wu's accusation spoil the mood. "We shall leave this matter for now."

Then, his gaze softened as he looked toward Zhao Feng. "Minister Zhao, you have earned many great military achievements for Qin. You conquered Wu'an, captured Handan, slew Lian Po, killed Pang Xuan, and captured the King of Zhao. Your contributions are indispensable, and you deserve a grand reward," Ying Zheng proclaimed.

With a wave of his hand, he picked up a Royal Edict that had been prepared on the table. A nearby Zhao Gao immediately stepped forward, holding the edict high and reading it aloud.

"A Royal Edict from the King of Qin! Zhao Feng, Main General of the fourth main battalion in Lantian, for his merits in destroying the Zhao state, stands as a role model for all warriors of Qin! He secured Wei City and defeated Wei Wuji, preventing the loss of Qin's territory! In the attack on the Zhao state, he slew Lian Po, killed Pang Xuan, and captured the King of Zhao. His military exploits are illustrious, and his contributions indispensable! According to Qin's system of military merit, he is due a grand conferment and reward.

"Effective today, Zhao Feng is promoted to the rank of Protector-General, titled Shangjiangjun, and his peerage is raised by two ranks. He is granted a mansion in Xianyang City, one hundred servants, one thousand pieces of gold, one hundred pieces of jade, one thousand bolts of Fine Cloth, a fine warhorse, and the official robes of a Shangjiangjun. This promotion to Shangjiangjun shall be proclaimed throughout the land!"

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Zhao Gao's voice echoed through the court. As the edict was read, it was announced that Qin had gained another Shangjiangjun. He was also the youngest Shangjiangjun in all of Qin, as well as the youngest holder of a Fourteenth Rank Nobility title.

The dynamics of the court had changed. A fourth Shangjiangjun, with command over a great military camp, had been named. Moreover, he possessed more potential than the other three. In the future, this Zhao Feng might even reach the status once held by the great Bai Qi!

Although the proposal to promote Zhao Feng to Protector-General had already been raised, pending only his return to be officially conferred, hearing it happen today was still shocking. Zhao Feng, not yet twenty years old, had become the youngest Shangjiangjun in the world.

"Your servant thanks you for your immense grace, Your Majesty," Zhao Feng said, bowing to the enthroned Ying Zheng without hesitation, a true sense of joy in his heart. Although he had anticipated some of this, it was now a reality.

A Shangjiangjun of Qin! He was now one of them!

In the four years since enlisting, he had risen from a common soldier through battlefield merit to become one of the few who wielded the greatest authority in Qin—a true noble. The rank of Protector-General came with the title of Shangjiangjun and the authority to form a personal guard of one thousand men, who would serve as his private soldiers. Across all of Qin, only the three Shangjiangjuns, including Wang Jian, commanded such a force. Not even the Chancellor, the head of the Civil Servants, nor the Eldest Imperial Son Fusu, who participated in court politics, possessed such a privilege. This was an authority bestowed by the crown upon its top generals to ensure their safety. In an age that esteemed martial prowess, a War General who led troops was more important than any Civil Servant—at least, that was the case now as Qin began its campaign of unification.

"My lords," Ying Zheng said with a slight smile. "Will you not congratulate Minister Zhao?"

When the King of Qin spoke, who in the court would dare disobey? At once, whether with sincere or feigned enthusiasm, all the civil and military officials turned to Zhao Feng with their congratulations. "Congratulations, General Zhao Feng."

Of course, the most genuine congratulations came from Wang Jian.

My son-in-law is a Shangjiangjun, just like me. This brings such glory to our family. Yan'er really has a good eye. Wang Jian thought, his heart swelling with excitement.

"Thank you, my lords," Zhao Feng replied with a smile, cupping his fist in his other hand in a salute.

"Shangjiangjun, please receive the edict," Zhao Gao said, walking over to Zhao Feng and presenting the Royal Edict with the utmost humility.

Zhao Feng accepted the Royal Edict with a slight nod. Although he felt a certain aversion to this future villain of history, right now Zhao Gao was but a lowly palace attendant. There was no need for Zhao Feng to show him any disrespect. As an intimate of the King of Qin, Zhao Gao understood him better than most, and making an enemy of him would be foolish.

"Wang Qing," Ying Zheng spoke once more.

"Your servant is here," Wang Jian immediately stepped forward.

"When you went on campaign, Wang Qing, I made you a promise," Ying Zheng said with a smile. "That upon your victorious return, I would arrange the marriage between your daughter and Minister Zhao. The time has now come to honor that promise."

With another wave of his hand, Zhao Gao received a second Royal Edict.

"A Royal Edict from the King of Qin! The daughter of Shangjiangjun Wang Jian, Wang Yan, is virtuous and well-mannered. She and the Qin War General Zhao Feng fell in love among the army, and their affection is mutual. Today, I bestow the daughter of the Wang family upon Zhao Feng to be his wife. They may choose a date for their wedding at their discretion," Zhao Gao announced loudly.

"On behalf of my daughter, this servant thanks His Majesty for this tremendous favor," Wang Jian said with a radiant smile as he bowed.

Today, Wang Jian was truly riding a wave of success. His future son-in-law had been appointed Protector-General, and now his daughter had received a royal decree of marriage. Double happiness had come to his doorstep. No, perhaps it was triple happiness.

"There is one more thing," Ying Zheng added with a laugh. "The wedding date for Liyang and Wang Ben has also been set for the middle of this month. Shangjiangjun, you must prepare well for it."