

## Longevity 336

Chapter 336: Appointing Zhao Feng as Protector-General! Great Joy! (3)

"Many thanks for Your Majesty's grace."

"Everything the Wang Family has is due to the King's vast favor. This servant would die a thousand deaths in repayment," Wang Jian said with unparalleled excitement.

Looking across the entire imperial court, no one could match the glory of his Wang Family now. Even without Zhao Feng's appearance, the Wang Family had been targeted by Wang Wan and his faction. They intended to leverage royal power to arrange a marriage with a daughter of the Wang Family, thereby securing their support for Fusu. If he had agreed, they would have truly become kin of the imperial family. However, Wang Jian would never have agreed. Even without Zhao Feng, he probably would have refused, because he deeply understood the terror of royal power and the horror of political strife. One wrong step, and his Wang Family would be doomed beyond redemption. The current outcome was the best he could have imagined. He was a Shangjiangjun, and his son-in-law was a Shangjiangjun. As long as the Wang Family committed no treason, they would be secure for at least two generations.

"A report for Your Majesty," an official in court robes stepped forward. It was Ying Xi, the current head of the imperial clan and, by seniority, Ying Zheng's uncle. "Mr. Fusu's wedding is scheduled for two days before General Wang Ben's. Our imperial clan still needs to make preparations."

"This matter shall be entrusted to the Zongzheng," Ying Zheng stated slowly.

Ying Xi immediately accepted the command. "This servant accepts the decree."

"However, this servant has a question," Ying Xi added.

"Speak," Ying Zheng said, his expression cold as he looked at Ying Xi. Clearly, he held little affection for this uncle, and his attitude was remarkably indifferent.

"By what standard should we arrange the Eldest Imperial Son's wedding feast?" Ying Xi asked respectfully, a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

A flicker of joy appeared in the hearts of Wang Wan and Huai Zhuang, and they too looked toward Ying Zheng expectantly. There were many different standards for the wedding feast of an imperial son. If it were held to the standards of a Crown Prince, it would carry that significance, and it was obvious Ying Xi was trying to probe Ying Zheng's intentions.

Ying Zheng glanced at him, seemingly seeing through the ploy, but he said nothing more than a casual remark. "Naturally, it will be handled according to the standards for a prince."

Upon hearing this, disappointment flooded the hearts of Ying Xi, Wang Wan, and their allies.

"This servant understands," Ying Xi replied respectfully.

A wedding feast... with Li Si's daughter. At that moment, Fusu felt utterly helpless, his heart filled with refusal. If he could, he would not marry Li Si's daughter at all. But after being postponed again and again, delayed for so long by the war, the day had finally arrived.

"Tingwei," Ying Zheng said, turning to Li Si with a smile. "You will also have much to attend to for this wedding."

"This servant understands," Li Si replied. Though reluctant, he could only nod in agreement.

"Very well," Ying Zheng said, looking down upon the court. "Do any of my ministers have more to report?"

Today was not originally scheduled for a court session. Ying Zheng had summoned the Hundred Officials specifically to welcome Zhao Feng's return.

"We have no further petitions," the ministers called out in unison.

"Then court is dismissed," Ying Zheng announced with a slight smile. "Zhao Feng, stay behind. Accompany me to Zhangtai Palace." He then stood and walked toward the rear hall.

"Your servants respectfully see Your Majesty off," the ministers all bowed.

Only after Ying Zheng's figure had disappeared did the ministers begin to disperse.

"Once inside Zhangtai Palace, you must not speak recklessly," Wang Jian said, approaching Zhao Feng to give him a solemn warning. "You are now deeply favored by the King. Remember not to act rashly. A ruler is a ruler, and a subject is a subject."

"Are you always this worried about me?" Zhao Feng asked, somewhat helplessly.

"I can't help it," Wang Jian said with a teasing glint in his eye. "I still remember what you said back then."

At the mention of his past words, Zhao Feng gave an awkward smile.

Kidnapping the bride? Kidnapping her right here in Xianyang? He had actually said those things. It had been a blatant threat to Wang Jian. If Wang Jian had truly insisted on marrying Wang Yan to Fusu, Zhao Feng would have turned the world upside down. That time, he had also shown a glimpse of his strength, which had successfully intimidated Wang Jian.

"Alright, alright, don't bring that up," Zhao Feng said with a laugh. "Yan'er is about to become my wife, so what might have happened, didn't. You can set your mind at ease."

"Fine. After you meet with the King, return to the residence quickly. You still haven't met your children, have you?" Wang Jian laughed. "Hahaha, they're very well-behaved. I adore them." As their grandfather, Wang Jian had naturally already met his grandchildren.

"Now that you mention it, I don't even want to go to Zhangtai Palace anymore," Zhao Feng said, a look of eagerness appearing on his face.

"A royal command cannot be defied," Wang Jian said with a smug smile. "You should hurry along. I'm going back to spend time with my grandchildren." He then turned and walked out of the hall.

Watching Wang Jian's receding back, Zhao Feng felt a surge of exasperation. This father-in-law is clearly trying to provoke me, all because I threatened him back then. Zhao Feng knew exactly what Wang Jian was doing, but he could only smile.

Just then, a voice called out, "Shangjiangjun, congratulations."

Yu Liao walked over, clasping his fists and smiling at Zhao Feng.

"I presume you are the disciple of Guiguzi, Lord Yu Liao," Zhao Feng replied with a smile.

"I'm surprised the Shangjiangjun knows of me," Yu Liao said, slightly taken aback.

"How could I not be aware of the esteemed Shaofu's reputation?" Zhao Feng smiled.

"Shangjiangjun, my congratulations," Li Si said as he approached.

"You are too kind, Tingwei." Seeing Li Si, Zhao Feng naturally returned the courteous gesture with a smile.

"I have long heard of General Zhao Feng's fame. Seeing you today, it is clear your reputation is well-deserved. You are truly a hero of Qin. To have a Shangjiangjun like you is a blessing from the heavens."

"Indeed. Among the younger generation of our Great Qin, Shangjiangjun Zhao Feng is undoubtedly the most outstanding."

At that moment, two more voices were heard as Wang Wan and Huai Zhuang slowly approached.

"Greetings to the two Chancellors."

One doesn't strike a smiling face. Although Zhao Feng was inwardly displeased with the two, he returned their greeting politely.

Following them, minister after minister came to Zhao Feng's side to offer their congratulations.

This, perhaps, is what it means to be in a position of power. When you are doing well, when you hold power, everyone around you is a friend. But the moment you fall from grace, everything changes.

After a round of these false pleasantries, Zhao Feng was completely surrounded by ministers, all inviting him to their manors for a private discussion with the clear intent of currying favor. This continued until Zhao Gao arrived.

"My Lords," Zhao Gao said with a bow, his voice hoarse. "The King has summoned Shangjiangjun Zhao Feng. If you have matters to discuss, I must ask you to wait for another day."

"Ah, I almost forgot."

"The King has summoned the Shangjiangjun."

"The Shangjiangjun should proceed to Zhangtai Palace for his audience."

"I won't delay you any further."

"Farewell."

...

Upon seeing Zhao Gao, the crowd of ministers clasped their fists and departed one by one.

"Shangjiangjun, please follow this servant," Zhao Gao said respectfully, bowing low after the crowd had dispersed. Without another word, he began to lead the way.

Zhao Gao. Who could possibly foresee his future? Seeing this historical figure, infamous for calling a deer a horse, at such close quarters filled Zhao Feng with a deep sense of wonder.

「Outside the hall」

Seeing Fusu waiting not far from the palace walls, Wang Wan and Huai Zhuang approached slowly.

"Eldest Imperial Son."

"My Chancellors," Fusu replied. "Is it truly unavoidable now?" he asked, his voice tinged with unwillingness.

The two chancellors exchanged a look, knowing exactly what Fusu meant.

"Prince," Wang Wan said with a sigh. "A royal decree cannot be defied. It has already been delayed for two years; it cannot be postponed any longer. The King's sacred will is set."

Hearing this, Fusu let out a deep sigh. With a frustrated flick of his sleeve, he strode away, utterly disheartened. For Fusu, this was a marriage he truly did not desire, so much so that he was tempted to resist.

"The Prince has truly been pushed to his limit this time," Huai Zhuang sighed as well.

"It matters not," Wang Wan said in a hushed tone. "Even if Li Si's daughter marries the Prince, it will change nothing. The Prince's philosophies are in direct conflict with Li Si's. At the end of the day, Li Si's methods are those of a tyrant. When the Prince eventually ascends the throne, all of it will be overturned."

Huai Zhuang shot a cautious glance around them and whispered, "Watch your words!"

"Ultimately," he continued, "the Zongzheng's probe today failed to reveal the King's true intentions. Could it be that the King truly has no plans to name the Eldest Imperial Son as the Crown Prince?" Seeing Ying Zheng's lukewarm attitude toward Fusu's wedding had made Huai Zhuang begin to doubt.

"Among all the princes, who can possibly contend with the Eldest Imperial Son?" Wang Wan countered with confidence. "The King is in his prime, so naturally, he has no intention of appointing a Crown Prince just yet. But once the world is unified, who else could he appoint besides the Eldest Imperial Son? The entire court knows it, the entire world knows it—the Eldest Imperial Son has the greatest chance. Do not worry."

In his mind, no one but Fusu was worthy of that position. With such an overwhelming advantage, who could possibly compete?

「Outside Zhangtai Palace」

"Shangjiangjun, please wait a moment," Zhao Gao said respectfully, turning back before slowly entering the palace.

"Your Majesty," Zhao Gao reported respectfully. "Shangjiangjun Zhao Feng has arrived."

"Have someone prepare the hot springs. I will bathe with the Shangjiangjun later," Ying Zheng instructed.

Zhao Gao was startled inwardly, but he immediately nodded. "This servant obeys your command."