

Longevity 4

Chapter 4: I Have No Ambition for Promotion; Survival Matters Most

The Qin Army's military merit system was incredibly strict. Aside from mutual oversight among the military personnel, there were officials specifically assigned to supervise military achievements. Anyone daring to falsely claim or seize military merits would be reported directly to the King of Qin for severe and unforgivable punishment. When the system was first implemented, perhaps some of the nobility dared to take such a huge risk, but now, no one did.

"Bao Qiu was killed by a soldier from your Logistics Army?" Wang Ben asked in surprise.

"Reporting to General Wang, it's true," the Junhou immediately replied. "Bao Qiu had taken off his battle armor and was feigning death among the corpses. When our logistics soldier approached, he suddenly burst up and killed two men. Fortunately, this soldier from our logistics camp reacted quickly and killed him."

"Bao Qiu, to die at the hands of a Qin logistics soldier... you truly met a wretched end," Wang Ben sighed, looking at Bao Qiu's wide-open eyes, which were filled with unresolved grievances.

A logistics soldier! Not a combat role, but one that dealt with sundry tasks like cleaning up the battlefield and tending to the wounded. For a Han general to die at the hands of a logistics soldier was indeed a disgrace.

Wang Jian glanced at Bao Qiu without much concern. "Take him away. Bury him with the Han soldiers," he ordered. "As for the logistics soldier who killed Bao Qiu, promote him according to the military merit system. A promotion of three military ranks and an advancement of one nobility rank." After speaking, he turned and walked back to the camp.

For him, a Shangjiangjun, this was merely a trivial matter. It was simply a case of bad luck for Bao Qiu and a stroke of great luck for the logistics soldier who had killed him.

"Understood." The Junhou immediately accepted the order and left.

"Have the battle reports and losses been tallied?" Wang Jian asked.

"The count has been finalized and will be urgently dispatched to Xianyang today," Wang Ben replied.

"Include the detail about Bao Qiu being killed by one of our army's logistics soldiers in the report. It will make for an amusing anecdote," Wang Jian said with a smile.

Wang Ben nodded immediately. "Understood."

"Oh, right. Where's that girl, Yan'er?" Wang Jian suddenly asked.

Wang Ben hesitated, unsure of what to say.

"Hmm?" Wang Jian frowned and sharply commanded, "Speak!"

"She went to Yang City with General Li Teng," Wang Ben said helplessly.

"Why didn't you watch her?" Wang Jian asked, slightly angered.

"Father, don't you know what kind of temperament Yan'er has?" Wang Ben retorted, somewhat reproachfully. "You shouldn't have agreed to let her accompany the army in the first place."

Hearing this, Wang Jian glared, feeling rather helpless himself. "You think I wanted to bring her? Ever since she heard we were deploying, she's been pestering me endlessly."

"Don't worry, Father," Wang Ben said with a smile. "She's protected by your five hundred trusted aides, and General Li Teng is also looking after her. She'll be safe."

"Enough," Wang Jian stated, somewhat resentfully. "Let her have her fun. After this campaign, I'll marry her off and let her new family manage her."

Wang Ben just laughed. "Do you have the heart to do that, Father? Besides, with Yan'er's temperament, who in all of Xianyang doesn't know about it? Who could possibly catch her eye?"

「Late at night.」

All the corpses on the border battlefield had been cleared away, and the thousands of soldiers from the Logistics Army had returned to camp to rest.

Outside the tents, it was pitch black. By a small bonfire, Wei Quan and Zhao Feng sat, a piece of meat roasting over the flames.

"Mr. Zhao," Wei Quan spoke up.

"What is it?" Zhao Feng replied.

"Aren't you anxious at all?" Wei Quan asked.

"Anxious about what?" Zhao Feng was puzzled.

"You killed that Bao Qiu today and achieved a great merit. This is an accomplishment that can get you promoted three ranks and even grant you a noble title," Wei Quan said, surprised. "Why are you so calm?"

"I don't have a strong desire for promotions," Zhao Feng said honestly.

Hearing this, Wei Quan's expression was one of great surprise in the darkness of the night. "Do you not know that with a promotion, your annual salary increases? And with a title, you can receive land?"

"I know," Zhao Feng replied with a laugh, "but what's so great about a promotion? I'm going home after two years of service anyway. I have a mother and a younger sister at home, and they're both waiting for me to take care of them. I can't afford to die on the battlefield."

"You really are different," Wei Quan remarked with a sigh.

"It's not that I'm different; I just fear death and cherish my life. No rank is better than just being alive."

"Lieutenant, how long have you been in the army?" Zhao Feng asked.

In the army, Zhao Feng had a policy of not offending anyone, always greeting people with a genuine smile. There wasn't much need for beating around the bush in the military, and Wei Quan was the only real friend he had made.

"I was conscripted at fifteen, so it's been about eight years now, I suppose," Wei Quan said slowly. "If I could, I would want to stay on forever. That way, I could earn a large enough annual salary to support my family."

"It's not an easy world to live in these days. If it weren't for my salary, my family would have starved to death long ago."

Zhao Feng did not reply.

In this era, there wasn't enough food to go around, let alone enough for everyone to eat their fill. People starving to death was a common sight, especially in winter when countless people froze or starved. It was an unsolvable problem.

When Zhao Feng was in his hometown, his family owned just over an acre of land, which was enough for the three of them. Furthermore, Zhao Feng had a good constitution. He could hunt in the mountains and often return with a substantial bounty. He was also skilled in various hunting traps from a later age, which helped him gather even more. By bartering with the villagers, his life was carefree, as long as he didn't crave luxury.

"Mr. Zhao," Wei Quan spoke up again.

"Go ahead, Lieutenant," Zhao Feng replied.

"Don't keep calling me Lieutenant. I'm nearly a decade older than you. Just call me Mr. Wei," Wei Quan said with a smile.

"Mr. Wei," Zhao Feng called out immediately with a chuckle.

"There you go," Wei Quan answered, quite content. He then moved closer to sit by Zhao Feng.

"In return for that 'Mr. Wei' and for saving my life, I'm going to teach you a few things," Wei Quan said, his face suddenly serious. "Do you want to listen?"

"Go ahead, Mr. Wei. I'm all ears," Zhao Feng immediately nodded.

"I saw it today—that sword strike of yours," Wei Quan said, looking as if he'd seen right through Zhao Feng. "Killing Bao Qiu accurately with a single strike from ten paces away... you've got some serious skill, lad.

"With your abilities, you're stronger than those actual Sharp Warriors.

"During new recruit training, you were holding back, weren't you? Otherwise, how would you have ended up in the Logistics Army?"

"Haha," Zhao Feng neither admitted nor denied. "It couldn't be helped. I don't want to die in battle. The Logistics Army doesn't have to face the front lines or near-certain death. I came to the right place."

Back in the new recruit camp, he had indeed concealed his skills. Outstanding performers were assigned to the main combat battalions to become Sharp Warriors. So, during training, if he was meant to use ten parts of his strength, he would only use five. In the end, he successfully managed to stay in the Logistics Army.

"Mr. Zhao," Wei Quan began. "As someone who has suffered under the boot of the powerful, I want to tell you something..."