

Longevity 40

Chapter 40: The Pinnacle of Power

At this moment, words were unnecessary. The time was right, a perfect fusion of passion. Inside the room, the candles were extinguished, and everything was left unsaid.

「The next day.」

The sky was just beginning to brighten as Zhao Feng opened his eyes, his head groggy and aching. Once his thoughts cleared, he turned his head, but the space beside him was empty. On the sheets was a faint red stain, its meaning self-evident.

Zhao Feng sat up abruptly, a look of longing on his face. "Has she really left?"

Last night, Wang Yan had given him everything. It would be a lie to say he hadn't been moved.

With a sweep of his eyes, Zhao Feng noticed a letter on the table, written on a piece of silk fabric. He immediately got up, walked over, and picked it up. It was from Wang Yan.

"Consider last night a fleeting dream.

"Born into a general's family, into the great nobility of Qin, my destiny has never been mine to control.

"I do have feelings for you. If it were possible, I would willingly marry you.

"But fate cannot be reversed. Let last night be my futile attempt to defy it.

"I hope you can return home soon to care for your mother. I wish you a long life of peace and prosperity.

"I am but a passerby in your life. I hope we have a chance to meet again, under circumstances unlike today's parting!"

The words on the silk fabric were sincere. They revealed Wang Yan's unwillingness to accept her predetermined fate, but also showed that, after the previous night, she had resigned herself to it. Zhao Feng put the silk fabric away, a complex, cold expression settling on his face.

Afterward, he ran out of the hall and dashed into the military camp. Spotting Zhang Han conducting drills, he asked urgently, "Where is Military Commander Wang?"

Seeing Zhao Feng's frantic expression, Zhang Han was taken aback. He quickly collected himself. "I have not seen Military Commander Wang. However, there were many trusted aides from the main camp at the side gate earlier. I don't know if she was there handling military affairs."

Hearing this, Zhao Feng didn't hesitate for a moment, running toward the camp's side gate with a speed that surpassed an ordinary person's.

What's going on? Zhang Han wondered, completely puzzled.

「At the side gate of the military camp.」

A carriage stood ready. Wang Yan was already seated inside, gazing at the camp with a sense of longing in her eyes.

"Miss," the Personal Guard Commander said, approaching the carriage with a bow. "It is time to depart."

Wang Yan nodded and lowered the curtain. Despite her reluctance, she knew it was over.

"Set off," the commander ordered.

Five hundred trusted aides swiftly mounted their horses, escorting the carriage toward the city outskirts. Gradually, they departed from the place where Wang Yan had once hoped to defy a fate she could not change.

By the time Zhao Feng burst through the side gate, the escort had already left with Wang Yan.

"She's... really gone," he muttered. "She compromised, accepting that so-called marriage of convenience."

A look of regret flickered in his eyes. After a moment, as he stared at the empty street, a new determination ignited within him, a fighting spirit he had never felt before. If you hadn't given yourself to me last night, your political marriage would have been none of my business. I would have had no reason to intervene. But now, things are different. You belong to me, and no one can take you away. Not even Crown Prince Fusu. Power... just give me enough time, and I won't fear even royal authority. Wang Yan, just you wait. I will make you a rightful bride of the Zhao family.

...

「In the council hall of the military camp.」

"Your subordinate, Zhao Feng, pays his respects to General Li," Zhao Feng said as he entered the hall, bowing to Li Teng.

"You've come so early?" Li Teng looked at Zhao Feng, a hint of surprise on his face.

"Today is the day I am to take command. I dare not be negligent," Zhao Feng replied immediately.

Li Teng looked Zhao Feng up and down, his surprise growing. "It's only been one night. How is it that you seem so different from before?"

"I am not sure, sir," Zhao Feng said with a smile.

"I feel that you were once extremely resistant to taking command in the main camp, but now you seem eager," Li Teng observed with a faint smile.

"Since I am here, I shall make the best of it," Zhao Feng replied promptly. "Now that I have entered the main camp, I must naturally serve the state, earn military merit, and strive to attain the highest possible station for a subject."

Hearing this, Li Teng smiled in satisfaction. "Good, very good! To be loyal to the state while also seeking glory for oneself... this is how Daqin's Elite Soldiers should be. With your valor, you will surely become one of Qin's finest generals."

Zhao Feng smiled and cupped his fists. "If I may ask, General Li, which Commandant Camp will I be leading?"

With Wang Yan gone, Zhao Feng knew he would be assigned the camp she had previously commanded.

"Commandant Wang has other duties and has already departed for her new post," Li Teng's expression grew serious. "Therefore, you will take over the Commandant Camp previously led by Commandant Wang."

"This subordinate accepts the order," Zhao Feng said at once. "However, I have one more request."

"Speak," Li Teng gestured.

"I wish to lead troops into battle, not remain garrisoned in Yang City," Zhao Feng said, his head held high and his tone firm.

Since he had chosen this path and could no longer lie low, Zhao Feng decided he would fight for himself, for Wang Yan, and for his mother.

With Qin's system of military merit, I will climb step by step! To the highest station a subject can attain! I will gamble everything on the future!

At his words, Li Teng burst out laughing. "HAHAHA! You are a fierce warrior; how could we let you be sidelined here? Once you are in command of your troops, you will have your duties."

"This subordinate accepts the order," Zhao Feng bowed immediately.

"Chen Tao," Li Teng called out.

In response, a Wanjiang walked briskly into the hall.

"General, your orders," Commander Chen Tao said as he entered, bowing to Li Teng.

"Zhao Feng," Li Teng said, gesturing to the man. "This is Commander Chen Tao, your direct subordinate."

Then he turned to Chen Tao. "This is Commandant Zhao Feng, the man who slew Bao Yuan and saved our army from disaster."

"It's an honor, General Chen," Zhao Feng said, cupping his fist.

"Commandant Zhao is too kind," Chen Tao replied, returning the gesture with a smile.

"Alright," Li Teng said sternly. "I will not involve myself in what comes next. Take Commandant Zhao to assume command of the camp. Once he is in charge, you are to march on the Han Capital immediately. You will handle the specific military arrangements yourself."

"Yes, sir," Zhao Feng and Chen Tao replied in unison, bowing.

「On the military training ground.」

Five thousand Sharp Warriors were assembled, standing in five solemn formations of one thousand men each. The five Junhou stood before their respective formations.

"General Chen has arrived!"

Following a loud cry, Chen Tao and Zhao Feng approached at a steady pace.