

## Longevity 70

Chapter 70: Sha Village, Mrs. Zhao and Her Daughter

At that moment, an elderly man walked slowly toward Mrs. Zhao and her daughter.

"Grandpa Wu."

"Is there news about my brother?" Seeing the old man approach, Zhao Ying broke into a smile, hurriedly opened the courtyard gate, and asked joyfully.

"Ying'er is certainly clever," the old man said with a smile, complimenting Zhao Ying before his gaze shifted to the anxious Mrs. Zhao.

"Village Chief, how is Feng'er?" Mrs. Zhao asked with trepidation.

It had been almost ten months, a long time with no news of her son. After being conscripted, he could have been assigned to the perilous Northern Frontier or perhaps to a Frontier Army on the border with other nations. All of these possibilities worried Mrs. Zhao.

"I asked around for a long time," Village Chief Wu said. "I don't know the specifics about Zhao Feng, but it seems he's been assigned to the Logistics Army."

"Assigned to the Logistics Army?" A hint of joy appeared on Mrs. Zhao's face. "That's wonderful. The term for the Logistics Army is two years, which means he has just over a year left at most."

"Mrs. Zhao, you seem to have a clear understanding of the military branches of Qin."

"That's right, the term for the Logistics Army is generally two years," Village Chief Wu said with a smile.

"Mother," Zhao Ying said cheerfully, "I told you my brother would be fine."

"With those scrawny arms and legs of his, he definitely wouldn't be assigned to the main combat forces," she added, laughing.

"How can you talk about your brother like that?" Mrs. Zhao chided her daughter with a glance.

However, after hearing Village Chief Wu's words, the worried look on her face lessened considerably. Not being assigned to the main combat forces was the best news she could hope for, as it meant he wouldn't have to charge into battle. More than any honors or promotions, Mrs. Zhao just wanted her son to return home safely.

"But it is true," Zhao Ying mumbled, sticking out her tongue.

In front of others, Zhao Ying was dignified and elegant, but with her mother and brother, she let her playful side show. She had been doted on by her brother since she was a child.

"However, I also heard another piece of news," Village Chief Wu said, hesitating as if unsure whether to continue.

"Village Chief, please just say it. I can handle it," Mrs. Zhao urged immediately.

"Qin has already marched east to attack Han. The Logistics Army Zhao Feng is in is likely also in Han," Village Chief Wu said slowly, his gaze filled with concern.

Mrs. Zhao trembled slightly at his words, but she quickly composed herself and managed a strained smile. "It's alright. Feng'er is in the Logistics Army, not a main combat regiment, so he won't be in danger."

"You're right. The duty of the Logistics Army on the battlefield is to clear away the dead and transport supplies and provisions. We don't need to worry too much about Zhao Feng. Besides, that boy has always been clever, full of tricks. He'll be just fine, even in a foreign land."

"So just wait for Zhao Feng to return in a year," Village Chief Wu added reassuringly.

「Sha Village」

The population was just under five hundred. Though this might sound like a lot, it included men, women, and children of all ages. After all, the people of the Divine Land Huaxia had lived in communal groups since ancient times, rarely scattering.

The Zhao family played a significant role in the village. Both mother and daughter were highly skilled in medicine. Villagers sought their help for all kinds of illnesses, big or small, and their services were far cheaper than visiting a doctor in the county town. Mrs. Zhao and her daughter didn't require much money, only needing some grain, cooking oil, and other daily necessities in return.

Of course, it wasn't just people from their own village who sought their help. Because of their superior medical skills, even people from neighboring villages, who had failed to be cured in the county town, were easily healed by them. As a result, word of their expertise spread throughout the surrounding area, attracting many outsiders seeking treatment.

Therefore, Mrs. Zhao and her daughter held a high status in the village and were well looked after.

Even now, with Zhao Feng, the only man in the family, away in the army, the mother and daughter lacked the strength to cultivate all their land. However, the able-bodied men of the village voluntarily helped them. They did this for no other reason than the kindness the Zhao women had shown them.

"Yes," Mrs. Zhao nodded. Although her heart was still filled with worry, knowing her son was assigned to the Logistics Army eased her anxiety.

"Grandpa Wu," Zhao Ying began, "don't soldiers receive an Annual Salary? My brother has been enlisted for nearly ten months, so why hasn't his Annual Salary been issued? I thought the soldiers from the village used to receive payments every season. Why is my brother's taking so long?" she asked curiously.

"Perhaps it's because Qin is at war," Village Chief Wu mused with a smile. "When the nation is campaigning abroad, the country's entire strength is focused on the war effort. It's natural for salary distribution to be delayed. It will likely be paid out after the fighting ends."

"I wonder how much my brother's Annual Salary is," Zhao Ying said, her voice full of anticipation.

"Ah, Ying'er, you shouldn't get your hopes up too high. Your Grandpa Wu here also served in the military. While I wasn't one of the elite Sharp Warriors in a main combat regiment, I was a Prefecture Soldier."

"The Logistics Army may not face the dangers of the battlefield, but when it comes to the Annual Salary and other benefits, they don't even compare to the Sharp Warriors. They're not even on par with ordinary Prefecture Soldiers," Village Chief Wu said with a smile.

"Ah?" Zhao Ying was a little disappointed.

Then she asked curiously, "Is the only difference between Sharp Warriors and logistics soldiers whether they go to battle or not?"

"That's not right at all. Sharp Warriors can earn noble titles and receive land from the Imperial Court. Even the Annual Salary of a low-ranking Sharp Warrior with a title is enough to support a family in comfort," Village Chief Wu said with a smile.

"Grandpa Wu, was your family's land granted by the Imperial Court?" Zhao Ying asked curiously.

Village Chief Wu stroked his beard and smiled. "Indeed. Although I was only a Prefecture Soldier, I also held a noble title, so I naturally received land from the Imperial Court."

"That's the difference. Sharp Warriors fight for the nation, earning glory and distinction through military merit on the battlefield. The Logistics Army, on the other hand, cleans up the battlefield. They have fewer opportunities and a lower status than true Sharp Warriors."

Hearing this, Zhao Ying nodded with a look of partial understanding. It was the first time she had ever learned so much about these matters.

"Compared to earning glory and distinction, I just hope my brother comes back safe and sound," Zhao Ying said with a smile.

"Haha," he laughed. "That's how you and your mother see it. After all, you have a skill; your medical expertise can support your family. But for the many who have no skills and heavy family burdens, the only way to survive is to become a Sharp Warrior and earn an Annual Salary to keep their family fed."

"Well, my talking so much doesn't change anything. In any case, your Zhao Feng will definitely be back in another year. As for the Annual Salary, when the Government Office allocates it, I, as the Village Chief, will help with the distribution. You two don't need to worry." Village Chief Wu smiled as he spoke to Mrs. Zhao and Zhao Ying.

"Thank you, Grandpa Wu, for bringing news about my brother," Zhao Ying said gratefully. "Otherwise, my mother would have been worried sick."