

Longevity 72

Chapter 72: The Han Capital Has Fallen!

The first sentence!

"The Han Capital has fallen."

Just seeing this sentence, a look of joy spread across Ying Zheng's features. The fall of the Han Capital was tantamount to the demise of the state of Han. The road for Qin's eastward expansion was now open.

"This is truly good news."

"It looks like the state of Han is about to be destroyed."

Seeing the joy on Ying Zheng's face, the ministers in the hall immediately understood. Those who could stand in this grand hall were all important officials of Qin, each one astute and well-versed in reading expressions.

Ying Zheng did not put down the military report, but continued to read. As he did, his expression grew even more astonished.

"The commander who breached the city, Capital Commandant Zhao Feng, has been credited with the chief merit in taking the city."

"He slew Han's newly appointed Senior General, Cao Yi, and Chancellor Zhang Ping of Han."

"It's him again!"

After Ying Zheng finished reading the report, a hint of surprise showed on his face. Since Qin had taken military action against Han, one name had appeared before him more frequently than any other. It wasn't Wang Jian, nor was it Li Teng; it was Zhao Feng, whose name graced this military report once again. He had started in the Logistics Army before being transferred to serve in the main combat forces, and now he had distinguished himself once more.

It seems Qin is truly blessed by the heavens to have bestowed such a valiant warrior upon me. Ying Zheng thought with an inward smile, composing himself. He then looked toward the ministers before him.

"The Senior General has reported that the Han Capital has fallen," Ying Zheng announced with a slight smile.

As his words fell, the ministers in the grand hall stared intently, their faces lighting up with excitement as they immediately bowed. "Your subjects congratulate Your Majesty."

"Han was the weakest among the states."

"For years, Qin has been nibbling away at its territory. Its demise now comes as no surprise."

"Although the Han Capital has been taken, there remains one matter that Li Teng has not explained to me," Ying Zheng said slowly.

The ministers' expressions changed slightly. But Yu Liao promptly stepped forward and asked tentatively, "May I ask Your Majesty, could it be that something has happened to the King of Han?"

"See for yourself," Ying Zheng said, waving the military report in his hand. A nearby Zhao Gao immediately took it and presented the report to Yu Liao.

Yu Liao opened it and fixed his gaze on the text. His initially calm expression gave way to a hint of shock, and he frowned upon reaching the end. The gazes of ministers like Wang Wan all converged on Yu Liao.

"Your Majesty," Yu Liao said earnestly, "even if the King of Han has indeed fled his capital, he surely cannot have escaped Han territory. Now that the Han Capital has been taken, its surroundings are filled with Qin's Sharp Warriors. Not even an army of tens of thousands could break through, let alone the fleeing King of Han."

"As long as General Li intensifies the search, we will definitely find the King of Han."

"Since the King of Han dared to escape, he must have devised ways to elude the search," Li Si said with utmost seriousness. "If he truly escapes, it will bring calamity to Qin. Should he flee to the Zhao state and the King of Zhao raises troops in his name, then our conquest of Han's territory will be threatened."

Hearing Li Si's words, Wang Wan and the others also grew grave.

"Father," Fusu said, stepping forward. He looked quite young, yet he exuded great confidence. "If the King of Han escapes, the disaster will be endless. Your son has a proposal."

"Speak." Ying Zheng looked at his eldest son with a hint of anticipation. Fusu, now fourteen, was being carefully groomed by him.

"Your son believes the King of Han is fleeing because he thinks Qin intends to kill him," Fusu said earnestly. "He likely assumes Your Majesty would execute him upon capture. To make him reveal himself, you need only issue an edict promising him grace if he surrenders. I believe the King of Han will surely appear."

Unexpectedly, after Fusu spoke, the anticipation on Ying Zheng's face vanished, replaced by a flicker of disappointment. Wang Wan's expression changed, a flicker of unease in his eyes.

"This matter," Ying Zheng began, "the Senior General will handle appropriately. There is no need for me to urge him; he will capture the King of Han."

"Yu Qing, once you have news from the Senior General, report to me immediately," Ying Zheng said, ignoring Fusu and addressing Yu Liao instead.

"This servant understands," Yu Liao immediately responded.

At this moment, seeing that his father had not adopted his strategy, a puzzled Fusu asked, "May I ask, Royal Father, is my counsel flawed?"

"If it were Han's ministers and officials, they could perhaps be managed with offers of grace and generous treatment. But the King of Han is the ruler of a state," Ying Zheng glanced at Fusu, finally explaining with a guiding tone. "How can your so-called offer of grace possibly compare to his hatred for the ruin of his nation?"

Upon hearing this, Fusu's expression shifted. After pondering for a moment, he bowed deeply to Ying Zheng. "Your son understands."

Ying Zheng nodded and said no more. "Chancellor."

"This old minister is here," Wang Wan immediately answered.

"Although Fusu has studied under Chunyu Yue, he still lacks political experience. You must continue to guide him," Ying Zheng said, turning his gaze to Wang Wan.

"Your Majesty, please rest assured," Wang Wan replied at once. "Guiding the Eldest Imperial Son is this old minister's duty. I will devote all my efforts to teaching him so that he may assist Your Majesty as soon as possible."

"Yu Qing," Ying Zheng said, turning back to Yu Liao. "You have seen the military report. Zhao Feng earned the chief merit for breaching the Han Capital, slaying Han's newly appointed Senior General and its Chancellor. In your opinion, how should he be promoted?"

"Your Majesty," Yu Liao replied respectfully, "the merit for breaching a city is considered the chief merit. For an officer of Capital Commandant rank or higher, this warrants a one-rank promotion in office and a two-rank advancement in nobility. However..."

"However what?" Ying Zheng stared at him intently.

"This minister believes it would be best to wait until Han is completely pacified before conferring merits and rewards," Yu Liao said with a smile.

"Zhao Feng?" Li Si asked with great interest. "Is that the same Zhao Feng who transferred from the Logistics Army to a main combat unit?"

At these words, the other ministers' gazes also focused on Yu Liao. If it had been any other military officer, he might not have been so memorable. But Zhao Feng was entirely different. That day in court, a soldier from the Logistics Army slaying the Han Senior General was an extraordinary feat. It was something one could not easily forget. It could be said that many ministers in the court had now committed the name Zhao Feng to memory.

"Indeed, it is he," Yu Liao said with a smile.

"Is Zhao Feng actually that formidable?" Li Si still found it somewhat unbelievable. "He earned the chief merit for taking the city?"

"The military report says so. The merits are tallied by dedicated officials and then verified by the Military Judge. It cannot be fabricated," Yu Liao replied with a confident smile. He was very proud of the system of military merits and rewards that he personally managed. Once a campaign began, he would dispatch numerous officials to tally merits, including the Military Judge.

"This servant congratulates Your Majesty," Li Si said, offering a fist-and-palm salute to Ying Zheng. "This man is a true talent."

Ying Zheng smiled faintly. "This man is indeed a valiant warrior. In him, I see the shadow of someone from Qin's past!"

Upon these words, all the ministers' gazes converged on him...