

Longevity 73

Chapter 73: Establishing a County! Appointing a Prefectural Governor! Invisible Clashes!

"Ministers, whose shadow do you think I saw in him?" Ying Zheng smiled and posed the question to his court.

Yu Liao smiled, stepping forward with great confidence. "Allow this servant to make a bold guess. Perhaps the Great King sees the shadow of the former Lord Wu'an in Zhao Feng?"

Upon hearing this, Ying Zheng burst into laughter. "Hahaha."

"Yu Qing, you are indeed worthy of being a Disciple of Guiguzi. Your wisdom is extraordinary."

"That's right. I do see the shadow of Lord Wu'an in Zhao Feng."

Hearing this, the ministers, who had previously seemed uninterested, all looked at Ying Zheng in surprise.

Although Bai Qi was executed as a criminal by King Zhaoxiang, all the officials in the court knew that the current King held the former Lord Wu'an in extremely high esteem. For the current King to compare Zhao Feng to Lord Wu'an showed just how highly he regarded him.

"The Great King's sentiment is not baseless. Zhao Feng truly does have a presence in the army reminiscent of Lord Wu'an."

"In his day, Lord Wu'an also rose from being a commoner, earning merit by slaying our enemies. He ascended step by step through military achievements to become the commander of Qin's armies, a feat that no one in the Qin military has ever been able to replicate."

"And Zhao Feng's accomplishments are even more legendary. He rose from the Logistics Army, and his new merits are truly astonishing," Yu Liao said with a smile.

"Yu Qing, you suggested postponing the conferment of rewards until after the fall of Han. What is your plan for this?" Ying Zheng then asked Yu Liao.

"Replying to the Great King," Yu Liao said respectfully. "The rewards for military merit are not for one person, but for all meritorious generals and soldiers, as well as the Sharp Warriors."

"The rewards for the Sharp Warriors can be determined by the Military Judge, but those for ranks at Capital Commandant and above must go through the Shaofu, and ultimately require the Great King's personal decree."

"Once Han has fallen, the Military Judge will report all meritorious war generals, and the rewards can be conferred all at once."

Ying Zheng nodded. "What Yu Qing says is right. Then it shall be as you have proposed. After the King of Han is captured and Han is completely vanquished, we will confer the rewards."

"The Great King is wise!" Yu Liao immediately exclaimed.

At this, Ying Zheng's gaze shifted to a minister who had remained silent from the very beginning.

"Minister Zheng, why do you remain silent?" Ying Zheng asked with a slight smile.

Hearing this, an expression of worry and gravity crossed Zheng Guo's face. He stepped forward slowly and knelt directly before Ying Zheng.

"This servant has a request for the Great King," Zheng Guo pleaded, pressing his forehead to the ground.

"Minister Zheng, your contributions to Qin, and to me, have been immense."

"So long as you ask, I shall grant it," Ying Zheng declared with a wave of his hand, his complete trust evident.

The words "shall grant" alone revealed how highly Ying Zheng valued the man before him. Of course, this was not merely favoritism on Ying Zheng's part; it was a testament to Zheng Guo's truly outstanding abilities.

Furthermore, the relationship between Zheng Guo and Qin, and the bond between him and Ying Zheng, was not as simple as it appeared. He was originally a man of Han, sent by the King of Han to exhaust

Qin's national power and ensure it would never have the opportunity to attack Han. The construction of the Guanzhong Canal was precisely this strategy to wear down Qin.

However, the King of Han had ultimately underestimated the human heart, and more so, the ambition of a master canal builder with a vision for the entire realm.

After arriving in Qin, Zheng Guo came to understand that the survival of a single state was a small matter compared to the peace that would follow the unification of Huaxia. He understood what a change the successful completion of the Guanzhong Canal would bring to Qin, and even to the world. Guanzhong would become a granary, the granary of the realm. And in this, he succeeded.

Historically, Qin's ability to unify all of Shenzhou was owed in no small part to the Guanzhong granary, making the Zheng Guo Canal's contribution indispensable. The very fact that the King of Qin named the great canal after Zheng Guo himself spoke volumes of the esteem in which he was held.

"This servant humbly begs the Great King to treat the people of the Han lands with benevolence. Do not treat them harshly, but see them as equals," Zheng Guo pleaded with earnest reverence, still kneeling on the ground.

Ying Zheng remained silent. He slowly rose from his throne, walked to Zheng Guo, and extended a hand to help him up. "You know my ambition well," he said.

"To rule all under heaven, to forge Huaxia into one," Ying Zheng continued, his voice steady. "This is my ambition, and it is the long-cherished wish of all the former kings of Qin. I will treat all people of the Divine Land Huaxia as equals, without discrimination."

Hearing these words, Zheng Guo's face was streaked with tears of gratitude as he allowed Ying Zheng to help him to his feet. "This subject swears to serve Your Majesty until death!"

For Zheng Guo, successfully building the Zheng Guo Canal for Qin had massively increased its grain production. Yet back in Han, he was reviled by countless people, cursed as a traitor, and his name was thoroughly disgraced. This was a similar fate for many foreign experts who had held high positions in Qin and made great contributions to the state. In their homelands, they were not valued, and some were even targeted. But once they achieved brilliance abroad, they were condemned.

Yet for all these foreign experts, regardless of their native state, their allegiance to Qin was rooted in a fundamental point: the personal charisma of the King of Qin and his long-held ambition of unification.

"Your Majesty," Wang Wan stepped forward to report, "now that Han is on the verge of falling, we must dispatch a minister to govern the territory. Regarding the administrative plan for the Han lands, we await Your Majesty's decision."

"I already have a plan for the Han lands," Ying Zheng said, turning back to stand before the throne.

Then, he declared in a loud voice, "After Han falls, its territory will be established as Yingchuan County."

"Li Teng will lead his army to garrison Yingchuan. As for the Prefectural Governor of Yingchuan County, you ministers may recommend a candidate."

As he spoke, Ying Zheng turned and surveyed the assembled officials.

Before anyone else could react, Wang Wan immediately stepped forward and announced loudly, "This subject recommends Huai Zhuang as Prefectural Governor to administer Yingchuan County."

"I recommend Yao Jia." Before Ying Zheng could speak, the Tingwei, Li Si, also stepped forward with his recommendation.

Wang Wan frowned and shot a glare at Li Si, but he ultimately restrained himself from making an outburst.

Clearly, each had recommended one of their own allies.

Qin. Currently the most powerful state in Shenzhou. Under Ying Zheng's rule, a balance was maintained in the court and over all affairs, perfectly managing the various factions. This was the strength of the kingly way.

Looking at the two recommendations, Ying Zheng's expression remained neutral. He turned his gaze to Zheng Guo. "Minister Zheng, do you have no one to recommend?"

Ying Zheng was clearly giving this opportunity to recommend someone to Zheng Guo. Everyone present knew that governing the newly conquered Han lands was an excellent opportunity to earn great merit. Since ancient times, military commanders have gained merit by expanding borders and slaying enemies in battle, while civil servants have gained merit by administering territory. Naturally, this was an opportunity for great merit that no one wished to pass up.

Hearing Ying Zheng's question, Zheng Guo adopted a thoughtful expression. He glanced at the ministers in the great hall, seemingly reluctant to get involved, yet he could feel Ying Zheng's expectant gaze upon him.

It was clear that Zheng Guo was not deeply involved in the clashes between the old and new nobility at court. He was a quintessential technical expert, focused solely on building canals, not a man who coveted power and influence.

"If this servant is to make a recommendation," Zheng Guo said after a moment's thought, "then I recommend Lord Meng Yi."

The moment the name Meng Yi was spoken, even Wang Wan and Li Si, who had intended to press their cases further, fell silent.