

Longevity 94

Chapter 94: Accumulating Strength! Mother's Birthday! (Part 2)

"Moreover, with 30,000 surrendered soldiers accompanying us, the journey will take even longer."

"In that case, we shall depart tomorrow," Zhao Feng said after a moment of consideration.

"General Zhao," a Wanjiang stood up and spoke with great seriousness. "Your subordinate feels that the matter of reorganizing the surrendered soldiers can still be reconsidered. Our army's strength is less than 50,000 men. If these 30,000 were to mutiny, the consequences would be unimaginable. Even if we manage to keep them under control in Wei City, the subsequent reorganization is bound to cause great turbulence."

"Your subordinate seconds the motion," another Deputy General stood up. "The danger posed by surrendered soldiers is known not only within our Qin Army but throughout the land."

"Your subordinate also seconds the motion."

Aside from Zhang Han, all four of Zhao Feng's Deputy Generals stood up to persuade him. In their eyes—no, in the eyes of all the army's commanders—Zhao Feng's plan to reorganize the surrendered soldiers was a foolish move, needlessly looking for trouble.

Looking at the four men before him, Zhao Feng smiled slightly. "General Chen, why don't you introduce these three generals to me?"

"I am Zhao Tuo."

"I am Wu Yue."

"I am Qi Sheng."

Before Chen Tao could speak, the three generals introduced themselves.

"Zhao Tuo?"

Upon hearing this name, Zhao Feng's gaze immediately fell upon the war general who called himself Zhao Tuo, and a peculiar feeling settled in his heart.

King Wu of Nanyue, Zhao Tuo. The very same Zhao Tuo who seized control of the Qin Dynasty's 500,000-strong army to become an independent warlord, who lived through the eras of Qin and Han. To think this man is now under my command.

Gazing at the Zhao Tuo before him, Zhao Feng was filled with an indescribable sensation. This man, one had to admit, was cunning and extraordinarily clever. During the End of Qin, as the dynasty teetered on the brink of collapse, Zhao Tuo had simply stood by and watched. After the fall of Qin, he had been more than happy to see it happen and establish his own complete independence.

King Wu of Nanyue, warden of Baiyue, who eventually established his own kingdom... that's an excellent assignment indeed. After Qin has conquered the Six States, I will request to be stationed as the warden of Baiyue. Then I'll just wait for the political landscape of Shenzhou to shift, right up until the End of Qin. Then I can lead the garrison army north to conquer Shenzhou for myself.

The moment he heard Zhao Tuo's name, Zhao Feng had instantly drafted a plan for his own future. The post of warden of Baiyue was simply too perfect, too suitable for sitting back and watching the tigers fight from a safe mountain. As for whether he could actually secure this post in the future... with Zhao Tuo under his command, could the man possibly compete with him for it? What a joke!

"The points you generals have raised are indeed reasonable," Zhao Feng began slowly.

Hearing this, the generals all looked at him with anticipation.

But Zhao Feng's tone shifted. "Everyone thinks the surrendered soldiers are impossible to reorganize, that they will become a burden, or even an army that turns on us and dooms us all. But I don't believe so. The Han surrendered soldiers we have captured are different from those of any other state in the past. Previously, surrendered soldiers always had a mother country to return to, a place where their loyalties and hopes remained. Naturally, they could never serve our Qin with all their heart."

"But things are different now," he continued. "Han has fallen. The Han Land has become our Qin's Yingchuan County. Millions of Han People have become Citizens of Great Qin. The families of these surrendered soldiers are already People of Qin. If they dare turn their coats in battle, if they dare to rebel, do they not fear the laws of Qin and the collective punishment that will befall their families?"

"Generals! This reorganization concerns the future military strength of Qin. Our state's ambition is to conquer the world, to unify it. Though Qin is strong, we must absorb the strength of other nations to become even stronger with every battle. Reorganizing surrendered soldiers into our army is an

innovative step. I, Zhao Feng, hereby guarantee that if an uncontrollable situation does arise, I will bear the responsibility alone and will not implicate any of you."

"However, if these reorganized surrendered soldiers prove their combat effectiveness, I will expect your full cooperation. This will be a collective achievement for all of you," Zhao Feng declared loudly to everyone in the hall.

Hearing his words, the generals in the hall fell into contemplation. The people of Han were now People of Qin, and the families of the Han surrendered soldiers were People of Qin as well. They had lost their motherland. It seemed his reasoning was sound.

"General, your reasoning is sound," Zhang Han said, bowing deeply at once. "Your subordinate is willing to follow you with all his might."

"Your subordinate will follow with all his might," Zhao Feng's personal subordinates immediately echoed.

Seeing this, and with Zhao Feng's words having reached such a point, it was clear that any further persuasion would be futile. Besides, his speech had genuinely moved many of the commanders.

"Your subordinate is willing to follow the General," the commanders in the hall declared one after another.

"We depart for Wei City tomorrow. You may all return for now to make your arrangements. As for provisions, I have already reported to the Military Judge. Supplies will accompany the army," Zhao Feng told the generals.

"Your subordinate takes his leave."

With that, the generals withdrew one by one. In the blink of an eye, the dozen or so commanders had all departed. But Zhao Feng did not leave, instead remaining seated.

Before long, a man dressed in the uniform of the Qin Army's Firescout Army appeared before him. He knelt respectfully before Zhao Feng. "Your servant, Han Xi, pays his respects to you, Master."

This was none other than the chief eunuch, Han Xi, whom Zhao Feng had saved in the Han Royal Palace.

"Rise," Zhao Feng said with a slight smile.

"Thank you, Master," Han Xi replied respectfully. He then stood to the side, his body bowed, not daring to overstep his bounds in the slightest.

For Han Xi, Zhao Feng had saved his life. Of the thousands within the royal palace—be they eunuchs, palace maids, or even concubines—none could escape the fate of being relegated to the status of a slave. Once someone was registered as a slave, they would be given as property to men who had performed meritorious service. Under the law, even killing such a slave would not result in punishment.