Longevity 99

Thankfully, the Patrol Army was on duty, so order was maintained. It wasn't just outside the city, either. Many of Xianyang City's citizens craned their necks as they lined both sides of the main road, all seemingly waiting in anticipation for something.

At the city gate, a middle-aged man stood ramrod straight, clad in the official attire of a Qin Military Official. He carried the imposing air of a seasoned general.

At that moment, an excited voice rang out at the gates, "They're here!"

Immediately, all eyes turned toward the distant outskirts of the city. In the distance, a series of black Qin banners gradually appeared. Beneath the fluttering flags, a division of elite, black-armored soldiers of the Qin Army could be seen approaching Xianyang. This force comprised both foot soldiers and cavalry.

At the center of the army were dozens of prison carts, each holding two or three people. Every person in the carts had once been rich or noble. They were all still clad in fine clothing, but now looked exceptionally disheveled. Leading the procession of prison carts was a battle-worn War General exuding a murderous and intimidating aura, a presence of unspoken authority.

It was none other than the Lantian Camp's Senior General, Wang Jian.

"General Wang Jian returns in triumph!"

"We welcome the triumphant return of the Senior General!"
Excited cries from the people of Qin rose up at the city gate. Suddenly, the entirety of Xianyang City came alive.
"We welcome the triumphant return of General Wang Jian!"
"We welcome the triumphant return of the Senior General"
Inside and outside the city walls, countless citizens let out waves of exuberant cheers. For the people of Qin, Wang Jian's command of the army against Han had resulted in a complete victory—the successful annihilation of the state of Han. Wang Jian was a hero of Qin.
For many passionate Old Qin People, unifying the world was a dream passed down for generations. The fighting spirit of the Old Qin People—to stand united in the face of national peril—needed no further explanation. It could be felt in these resounding cheers.
We, the Old Qin People, are united as one. Why should we worry that the world will not be ours?
Basking in the fervent atmosphere, Wang Jian, riding at the forefront, felt a surge of honor. To be so welcomed by the people of Qin was a distinguished privilege.

Soon, Wang Jian rode his horse to the city gate. Upon seeing the figure waiting there, his lips curled into a slight smile and he dismounted.
"Meng Wu, I didn't expect the Great King to send you to greet me!" Wang Jian stepped forward, speaking to Meng Wu with obvious pride.
Meng Wu. He was one of the three Senior Generals of Qin and second to none. He was the current Family Head of the Meng Family, the Northern Frontier Senior General, Meng Wu.
Faced with Wang Jian's smug expression and under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Meng Wu suppressed his irritation and spoke in a formal tone, "By the Great King's decree, I have been dispatched to welcome you."
"Hahaha," Wang Jian let out a hearty laugh and clasped his fist in a respectful salute toward the city. "I am deeply grateful for the Great King's generous favor."
"Where is the King of Han?" Meng Wu asked loudly.
"Right behind me," Wang Jian chuckled and waved his hand.
Instantly, more than a dozen of Wang Jian's trusted aides pushed a prison cart forward. Inside, dressed in his king's robe, was the King of Han, now devoid of all spirit and filled with terror. Before leaving the lands of Han, he might have harbored hopes that loyal subjects would rescue him. But as he left his homeland and entered the Qin heartland, despair set in. His expectations had proven to be empty, though he had still clung to a sliver of fortune. Now, escorted to the Qin capital of Xianyang, his last glimmer of hope was extinguished. He was utterly finished.

"The King of Han a ruler of a nation to think he's now a prisoner of our Great Qin!"
"Hahaha, Heaven blesses Great Qin!"
"With Han fallen, the territory of Great Qin has expanded greatly!"
"Even a king has become our prisoner! This is proof of the prosperity and might of our Great Qin!"
"The great aspiration of our ancestors will be fulfilled by our Great King! The world will finally be unified under Qin!"
"I've never seen a king become a prisoner before"
Seeing the King of Han sitting limp and expressionless in the prison cart filled the onlookers with a profound sense of pride, akin to the national pride of a great power spoken of in later ages. Looking across the world, after so many years of the various states contending, which nation had managed to exterminate another? Looking across the world, only Qin. This was the pride of a powerful nation.
"King of Han," Meng Wu said with a hint of mockery as he looked at the man in the cart. "Welcome to Great Qin. I imagine this isn't what you wished for; otherwise, you wouldn't have abandoned your capital and fled."

Meng Wu truly looked down on a king who would abandon his capital and flee. Faced with the taunt, the King of Han didn't even dare to lift his head in anger. He kept his head bowed, not daring to speak.
"General Wang," Meng Wu declared loudly, "the Great King has decreed that you are to escort the King of Han into the palace. The Great King will greet you personally outside the main hall."
"Your servant obeys the decree," Wang Jian accepted the command joyfully.
For Wang Jian, this spectacle, with the entire city watching, was an immense gratification of his vanity. Furthermore, this victory would etch his name, Wang Jian, into the annals of history.
Who in the world wouldn't desire such a thing? Throughout history, how many have fought and failed to leave their mark?
Under the gazes of the entire city's populace, Wang Jian mounted the prison cart and personally took the reins. Meng Wu also mounted his horse. The two Senior Generals of Qin personally escorted the King of Han toward the royal palace.
Following Wang Jian's entry, his trusted aides and elite soldiers began escorting the other prison carts carrying the Han officials into the city. Watching these once-powerful figures of Han reduced to prisoners, every citizen in the city was overcome with excitement and an indescribable sense of pride.
"Long live Great Qin!"

"Long live the Great King!"