

I. Dynasty 175

Chapter 175: The Power of Fire Jars

Blood splattered as Lu Fei pulled his sword out from a slave soldier's chest.

By now, his whole body was stained red with blood. Even though rocks and logs were being thrown down again and again, slave soldiers kept climbing up the 500-meter city wall in the chaos.

"Push down the ladder!"

Lu Fei gave the order. Two soldiers used forks to push the ladder away. The slave soldiers climbing on it screamed as they fell.

"Shieldmen!"

Lu Fei looked ahead and saw barbarian archers about to shoot. He quickly shouted the warning.

The shieldmen on the wall raised their shields just in time. A loud pattering sound echoed as arrows hit them.

"Tatatata!"

One soldier's shield looked like a hedgehog, full of arrows. Even the metal on the outside was pierced through.

"They're using armor-piercing arrows. Be careful!" Lu Fei shouted after seeing the arrowheads.

Then he let a captain take his place and walked toward Xiao Ming.

"Your Highness, let's use the catapults now."

Lu Fei was frustrated. So far, only the slave soldiers had died. The barbarian archers were still far enough—about 100 meters away—that they were safe.

Several soldiers held up their shields to protect Xiao Ming. Xiao Ming said, "I was just about to tell you. Have the men throw the gunpowder jars. Light all three fuses at once."

"Got it!" Lu Fei replied and ran back, shouting, "Blow these bastards to pieces!"

This time, Xiao Ming had ordered the gunpowder jars to have three fuses each to make sure they exploded properly, since they often went out when thrown.

The soldiers quickly loaded the jars into the catapults and aimed at the barbarian archers.

The barbarian archers, standing about 200 meters away, kept shooting at the Qingzhou soldiers from a distance.

Many soldiers were hit and injured.

“Fire!”

With that command, 50 catapults launched the lit jars into the sky.

The archers saw black dots flying toward them and thought they were just stones. They tried to dodge.

“Thump, thump...”

The jars, covered in thick straw, hit the ground with heavy thuds.

Some archers couldn’t escape in time and were killed instantly.

Those who dodged looked at the round jars on the ground and started laughing, feeling proud of themselves.

But their laughter stopped when a loud BOOM shook the area.

A huge explosion and thick smoke covered the nearby barbarian soldiers. Anyone within 10 meters fell to the ground.

The jars burst into deadly pieces—ceramic shards, nails, and even foul-smelling filth.

Those at the center of the explosion were blown apart. Others nearby were badly hurt and screamed in pain.

The barbarian soldiers were terrified and started retreating.

Then the second wave of jars came flying. The injured who hadn't escaped yet were blown to bits.

"Nice shot! Hahaha!" Lu Fei laughed loudly from the wall.

The surprise attack made the barbarians retreat, and the slave soldiers left behind were hit by a rain of arrows from above.

Gurtai barely kept his horse from running away in panic.

The continuous blasts made all the barbarian warhorses uneasy. Their riders struggled to control them.

“Is this the secret weapon of Prince Qi?” Gurtai’s face went pale.

Even from 300 meters away, he could feel the ground shake.

“Must be,” Liu Xuan said. “First the fire lances, now this.”

Gurtai sneered. “Soon, they’ll see we barbarians can use gunpowder too. Then I’ll blow up their walls and soldiers together.”

Liu Xuan nodded. He knew they had hidden barrels of gunpowder ready to blow up the city walls.

They had learned this tactic from fighting the Ottoman Empire. This siege wasn’t just for attack—it was also a test of the Qingzhou army’s strength.

Their second goal was to dig tunnels under the walls. When their main force arrived, they’d use explosives to destroy the walls and wipe out the defenders.

Thinking of this, Liu Xuan felt confident about winning. He said, “And I heard Beishan Taiji brought cannons that can shoot stones over 500 meters. Those Cangzhou defenders won’t stand a chance.”

Gurtai laughed. "Yeah, let's give these southerners a few more days to live."

Then he ordered his archers to retreat. He didn't care about the lives of the slave soldiers.

The battle lasted from morning until night. The barbarians kept sending waves of slave soldiers.

Now, bodies were piled up at the foot of the wall. The sunset looked like blood, making the scene even more tragic.

The trench was filled with corpses. Xiao Ming slammed the wall in frustration.

"After all that fighting, we haven't even scratched the real enemy! Damn it!"

Niu Ben comforted him, "Your Highness, this is how the barbarians fight. They wear down their enemy before launching a real attack."

Xiao Ming looked at the cannons under the black cloth and nodded.

"When their main army comes, I'll make them pay."

As the day's fighting ended, Niu Ben ordered the soldiers to prepare more rocks, logs, and supplies.

This was just a test. The real bloody battle was still ahead, and he knew it.

But from today's fight, his confidence grew. The Qingzhou armor had protected the soldiers well, and casualties were few.

The only real injuries came from the archers' arrow volleys.

Back at the camp, LuLuo helped Xiao Ming remove his armor. Seeing the bloodstains, she asked worriedly, "Your Highness, are you hurt?"

"I'm fine," he replied, exhausted. His nerves had been tight all day, and now he could finally relax.

Green Luo sighed in relief. Her heart had been pounding.

Then she said, "By the way, Chief Secretary Pang left a message—four more cannons are on their way to Cangzhou."

"Really? That's the best news I've heard all day," Xiao Ming smiled.

With those four, they'd have 30 cannons in Cangzhou. And soon, the main barbarian army would arrive.