

I. Dynasty 178

Chapter 178: Artillery Fire

“Aim at the Huihui Cannons!”

Luo Xin shouted. Every few meters, a soldier repeated his command down the line.

Along the 500-meter-long city wall, thirty cannons had been set up—one nearly every ten meters. Orders had to be relayed one by one.

Once everything was ready, Xiao Ming nodded at Luo Xin.

“Fire!” Luo Xin roared.

“Fire!” Voices echoed along the wall.

BOOM! BOOM! Thunderous explosions rang out as the cannons shot flames. Black cannonballs flew like dark arrows straight toward the barbarian camp.

Beishan and Gurtai were looking at Cangzhou City while Beishan discussed the next step of their siege.

Once the Huihui Cannons were fully assembled, they would launch jars filled with fire oil onto the walls. When those jars shattered, they would ignite entire sections in flames.

At the same time, slave soldiers would charge again. One group would dig a tunnel beneath the walls.

Once the tunnel was complete, another group would carry in barrels of gunpowder and set them underneath the wall, ready to explode.

This would blast open a hole in the wall, and the slave soldiers would pour in like a tidal wave.

If they captured the city gate, the barbarian cavalry would storm in and wipe out the defenders.

Beishan and Gurtai were fully aligned. Everything depended on the Huihui Cannons suppressing the wall defenders.

Just then, they saw flashes of fire from the city walls. Thunder roared—and suddenly, with a sharp “whoosh”, a group of cavalry lined up beside Beishan was flung backward. One cannonball tore through sixteen riders before stopping.

Cries of pain followed. Beishan looked at the first soldier: his chest was mangled, with a bloody hole in the middle.

The soldiers behind him were just as badly injured—arms bent unnaturally, heads smashed.

Beishan broke into a cold sweat. And that was only the beginning.

He saw more soldiers around him get thrown into the air in the same way.

Thirty cannon blasts echoed from the city walls. Soon, bodies littered the barbarian camp. Three to four hundred cavalry had died horribly.

“What’s going on?” Beishan demanded, turning to Gurtai.

Gurtai looked at Liu Xuan.

Sweat poured down Liu Xuan’s face. “Something’s wrong. This is Prince Qi’s secret weapon. We’ve been tricked.”

“Secret weapon?!” Beishan was furious. He felt Gurtai had misled him.

He never trusted Gurtai in the first place, and now he felt proven right.

A cavalry soldier ran over and handed Beishan a blood-soaked iron ball.

“Taiji, this is what hit us!” the soldier reported.

Beishan took the ball and examined it. It was a solid iron cannonball. He frowned deeply.

“Gurtai, you owe me an explanation.” Beishan’s tone turned icy. “You misled me. Hundreds of soldiers died because of your mistake.”

Gurtai opened his mouth but hesitated. “Taiji Beishan, the Cangzhou defenders are just too clever. I did everything I could to probe their strength.”

BOOM!

Another blast. A cannonball struck one of the Huihui Cannons mid-assembly. It exploded in a roar and shattered the machine completely.

Then the ball bounced across the ground, smashing into more cavalry. Screams rang out again.

The barbarian cavalry panicked. Even at 500 meters from Cangzhou, they were still getting killed.

It felt like they were targets on a shooting range.

The cannon fire also scared the horses. They stomped nervously. Only the soldiers guarding Taiji Beishan stood still, like statues.

At the same time, hundreds of barbarian soldiers lifted their shields and formed a protective wall around Beishan.

They stood in thirty horizontal lines, shields planted in the ground, faces grim.

Staring at the blazing city wall, Beishan said to Gurtai, "Tell your men to attack with everything they've got. I want that weapon."

"Taiji Beishan!" Gurtai hesitated.

"What? Are you refusing my order?" Beishan barked. "This attack on Cangzhou was ordered by the Khan himself. Disobeying me is disobeying him!"

Not just Gurtai—even his soldiers were shaken by the terrifying way their comrades had died. They had never seen anything like it.

Even the Great Yu Empire's fire lances could only shoot about 200 meters, and they fired stones.

But this new weapon, which spat fire just like a fire lance, could kill dozens of people from 500 meters away.

Though he didn't want to waste more forces, Gurtai gave the order.

Twenty thousand slave soldiers charged toward Cangzhou.

The cannons roared again. The Huihui Cannons were destroyed one after another under the barrage.

Seeing the chaos in the barbarian camp, Luo Xin laughed loudly: "Now you see how strong we really are, you damned barbarians!"

Lu Fei stared through his telescope at the camp. Every time a cannonball hit and killed a line of enemies, he shouted "Nice shot!"

But when one cannonball landed uselessly on open ground near him, he turned and kicked the soldier who fired it. "Idiot! Why the hell are you aiming at the dirt?!"

The soldier stumbled back. "But... sir, you were the one who aimed that one!"

Lu Fei's face turned red. He raised his hand. "Say that out loud and see what happens."

Niu Ben stroked his beard and smiled. "Your Highness, I'm truly convinced now. With these cannons, the barbarians will never take Cangzhou."

Cannonballs tore through the barbarian camp like skewers through candied fruit, cutting down soldiers in rows.

The morale of the city's defenders soared. Their faces were full of joy and excitement.

But when the next wave of slave soldiers surged forward like a tide, their expressions turned grim again.

The Huihui Cannons were reduced to piles of broken parts.

Xiao Ming said, "Free fire!"

Receiving the command, Luo Xin shouted, "Everyone, aim carefully! Hit where the crowd is thickest!"

"Yes, sir!" the artillerymen responded, adjusting their aim toward the densest clusters of slave soldiers.

To them, anyone attacking Cangzhou was the enemy. Defending the city was their only purpose.

“Fire!”

“Fire!”

“...!”

Dozens of solid cannonballs were launched. Blood sprayed into the air in misty arcs.

Half of the cannons kept targeting the barbarian camp. They wouldn’t get to sit back and watch quietly.

The thunderous blasts terrified the slave soldiers.

For the first time ever, they began to retreat—before even reaching the city walls.