

I. Dynasty 180

Chapter 180: Night Raid

When Zhan Xingchang came out of the barbarian camp, the surrounding barbarian soldiers whistled at him mockingly.

He had gone to negotiate with the barbarians, but he never got to meet Beishan Taiji himself.

Instead, he met a Han man named Liu Xuan.

Zhan Xingchang immediately stated Prince Qi's conditions for surrender: the barbarians must withdraw from Shanhai Pass, give control of You Prefecture and nearby lands to Prince Qi, and in return, Prince Qi would recognize the barbarians as his overlord.

Of course, this was an outrageous demand, and just as he expected, the negotiation ended with no agreement.

The barbarian side offered their own terms: open the gates of Cangzhou City, and they promised not to harm Prince Qi. They would grant him one prefecture as a fief.

Naturally, Zhan Xingchang also refused. But he didn't reject them outright—he said he needed to return and ask Prince Qi for instructions.

“Your Highness, this buys us three to five more days before we need to negotiate again,” Zhan Xingchang reported. “But from what I could tell, the barbarians didn’t seem too upset either. I think they’re also stalling.”

“Beishan never plays by the rules. No one can predict what he’ll do next,” Xiao Ming replied. “We’ll stay still and watch. Besides, negotiations in war are always mixed with fighting.”

Then he turned to Luo Xin. “Don’t sit idle tonight. Fire a few rounds at their camp. Make sure they don’t get a good night’s sleep.”

“Leave it to me, Your Highness,” Luo Xin said with a bloodthirsty grin.

This negotiation was never serious—Xiao Ming only meant to mess with Beishan. But he also knew Beishan might be doing the same to him.

Since both sides were bluffing, it was fair game.

After all, it’s the attacker who’s anxious, not the defender.

As night fell and the barbarians lit their campfires to cook, cannons suddenly roared from the city wall. One after another, black solid shot cannonballs flew into the barbarian camp.

Through his telescope, Luo Xin watched the chaos unfold. The barbarian soldiers were eating when the cannonballs hit, injuring many of them.

Beishan was eating too. The explosions startled him so much that he ran out of his tent and hid behind his shield, terrified he'd be hit by a cannonball.

Gurtai was hopping mad, yelling and pointing at the city wall. They never expected that right after sending their envoy, the defenders would launch an attack.

The barbarians scrambled to regroup, but when no second shot came for a long while, they cautiously returned to their meals.

As darkness fully set in, the barbarian campfires glowed brightly. What they didn't know was that Cangzhou's defenders could see them much better than they could see the wall.

Luo Xin remained on the wall with his telescope, constantly watching. Every so often, he fired another shot into the camp.

Each explosion sent the barbarians into chaos. No one wanted to be killed by a cannonball in their sleep.

The fear kept many of the cavalrymen awake, their eyes locked on the glowing walls.

They realized that the cannonballs always came right after the flashes of fire. So every time they saw fire, they panicked and scattered.

Beishan couldn't sleep either, even though he was surrounded by guards holding shields.

He was waiting for news that the city wall had been breached.

But then he noticed light at the base of the wall—Cangzhou's soldiers were pouring fire oil down.

"Stay alert tonight!" someone shouted. "His Highness said the barbarians might try to sneak in and plant explosives. If they succeed, we'll all be blown sky-high!"

Tonight, Lu Fei was on night watch.

He poured the oil, setting fire to the piles of corpses and broken ladders beneath the wall.

Since Xiao Ming figured out the barbarians wanted to blow up the wall by planting gunpowder, he had ordered his soldiers to keep a close eye on any slave soldiers digging tunnels.

Every time they spotted one, the defenders would shoot them immediately.

"Yes, Captain!" The soldiers were startled by Lu Fei's warning. Even the tired ones quickly snapped awake.

Just then, someone shouted, "There's someone down there!"

Immediately, arrows rained down. Cries of pain followed.

One intruder fell—but more came running from the shadows.

Lu Fei frowned and threw a torch down. The flames lit up a swarm of slave soldiers.

Taking advantage of the night, the enemy had launched another surprise attack.

“Throw the gunpowder jars! Now!” Lu Fei shouted.

The barbarians were cunning. To avoid being targeted by the cannons, they attacked under cover of night.

BOOM! BOOM! The sound of explosions rang out again.

The entire city woke up. Xiao Ming jumped out of bed and rushed to the wall. He could already hear the shouting and clashing outside.

At the same time, the sound of arrows whistled through the air—barbarian archers were hiding in the darkness, firing at the city.

The defenders couldn't see them clearly in the dark and had to fire blindly. Casualties rose far faster than during the day.

"Throw the jars below the wall!" Xiao Ming shouted as he arrived.

Beishan's goal was clear—he wanted to bury explosives under the wall. They had to stop him at all costs.

So there was no more holding back on the gunpowder jars.

Shieldmen quickly formed a wall in the darkness while the defenders kept hurling jars down.

Screams and explosions echoed. More and more bodies piled up below the wall.

Staring into the pitch-black barbarian camp in the distance, Xiao Ming looked grim. Beishan was indeed a tough opponent.

With no visible targets, the cannons couldn't be used effectively. It was going to be a long, miserable night.

The battle raged until morning. Over 600 gunpowder jars were used up that night. Beneath the wall, the bodies formed a thick layer.

But it wasn't for nothing. The slave soldiers' corpses had filled the trenches and blocked the holes being dug to plant explosives.

Digging again wouldn't be so easy now.

"Your Highness, at this rate, we'll run out of gunpowder jars," Luo Xin said anxiously.

They had hoped to conserve ammo—but Beishan's tactics had shattered that plan. If he launched a few more night raids like this, the wall might really fall.

Seeing Xiao Ming's concern, Niu Ben spoke calmly.

"Your Highness, don't worry. Cannons may be powerful, but in the end, it's the people of the Great Yu Empire who will win this war. Even without cannons and gunpowder jars, we can still fight with our own flesh and blood to stop the barbarians."

Xiao Ming paused, then looked at the soldiers on the wall.

Yes—when all else fails, he still had these brave, fearless warriors.

So what was there to fear?