

## I. Dynasty 195

### Chapter 195: Military Reform

In the Governor's Residence, the military officers listened quietly as Xiao Ming explained the new army structure.

Compared to the Great Yu Empire's current military hierarchy, this new system was simpler and easier to understand.

With the help of the knowledge crystal's memory enhancement, Niu Ben and the others quickly grasped the new structure—though the terminology still felt strange to them.

But Qingzhou was full of new things these days. To progress, the old had to be discarded.

"The military structure must change. We also need to establish a dedicated Logistics Department," Xiao Ming continued. "Combat soldiers will focus solely on training, while logistics will handle rations, food storage, equipment procurement, battlefield medics, and other support tasks."

Niu Ben nodded, noting this down. He agreed that specialization was necessary.

Beyond this, Xiao Ming also addressed military uniforms.

Armor was for battle, but to distinguish soldiers from civilians, he planned to design dedicated military uniforms—a key step in formalizing the army.

Additionally, he intended to strengthen discipline training, starting with military salutes.

Subordinates must salute superiors when reporting.

In camp, soldiers would be trained to fold their bedding neatly, march in orderly lines (two in a row, three in a file), and maintain proper posture.

Before, Xiao Ming had found such drills ridiculous. But after consulting the knowledge crystal, he realized these seemingly trivial habits were crucial for instilling discipline—exactly what firearms-equipped troops would need most.

In an era where firearm accuracy was poor, formations had to be tight and orderly—the infamous “line up and shoot” tactic of later centuries.

Even the drummers in marching columns served a purpose: maintaining rhythm, like chanting “left, right, left.”

A scattered formation could collapse under enemy volleys, leaving no chance for counterattacks.

At first, Niu Ben and the others were stunned. But they gradually understood Xiao Ming’s reasoning.

Military discipline was serious business—they wouldn’t dare take it lightly. Soon, no one objected.

With military industry and army reforms addressed, the meeting shifted to battle summaries.

Niu Ben stood first—and immediately tore into Lu Fei.

“To use His Highness’s words: you, Lu Fei, are undisciplined and reckless! On the battlefield, you do as you please! This must be punished severely, lest other officers follow your example!”

Lu Fei hung his head. He’d lost his temper during the fight.

Luo Xin added, “Also, Lu Fei wasted cannonballs by firing randomly. That deserves punishment too.”

Lu Fei bristled. “That little rat! I told him to shut up! Just wait till I get back—”

Niu Ben sighed. “Your Highness, see? Lu Fei never learns. I’ve whipped him before—useless. We need a way to deal with troublemakers like him. Many copied his impulsiveness in battle, causing unnecessary deaths.”

“Easy,” Xiao Ming said. “We’ll establish a military court to enforce discipline among officers and soldiers. As for what that is and its laws, I’ll explain later. But for punishing officers like Lu Fei, I have a method: no beatings, no scolding—just a few days in the ‘black room.’”

“Black room?” The officers looked puzzled.

Lu Fei’s gut twisted. Xiao Ming always had ideas. “Your Highness, spare me! I swear I’ll behave!”

Xiao Ming liked Lu Fei, but his recklessness in battle couldn’t be ignored.

“This is serious. You need to remember this lesson—for your own good. Next time, you might not live to regret it.”

He then explained the “black room”—solitary confinement.

Nothing tormented the mind like isolation. A week alone, with no one to talk to, could drive a man mad.

Hearing this, Lu Fei turned pale.

As a chatterbox, being locked in darkness with only himself sounded worse than death.

Niu Ben was impressed. Even punishment was refined under Xiao Ming.

Next, officers summarized battle experiences—especially regarding firebomb throws and cannon use.

Many now spoke of the barbarians with confidence, not fear.

Finally, Xiao Ming concluded: “The barbarians are paper tigers!”

The officers burst into laughter. “Your Highness is right! They look scary, but poke them, and they collapse!”

Watching them, Xiao Ming smiled. The battle’s purpose was achieved: fear of the enemy weakened morale before fighting even began.

As discussions continued, a servant entered and whispered to Xiao Ming:

“Your Highness, the imperial decree has arrived.”