

I. Dynasty 200

Chapter 200: Discussion on Cannons

A round red sun had just risen over the horizon when the sound of bells suddenly rang out in Chang'an City.

After three rounds of bell chimes, the gatekeepers in the city gradually opened the gates of each residential ward. People began appearing on the morning streets, and thin wisps of cooking smoke slowly floated into the sky.

Yesterday afternoon, Xiao Ming had stayed at the Jade Water Pavilion until the palace gates were about to close, and only then did Consort Zhen reluctantly let him leave.

In Chang'an City, Feng Deshui had already prepared a temporary, elegant courtyard for Xiao Ming to stay in.

After seven days of tiring travel, he was already very exhausted. After returning last night, he slept straight through until now.

"Your Highness, it's time for breakfast. In a little while, you'll probably be summoned to court."

After washing up, Lü Luo brought in breakfast. It was made by the cooks who had come with him from the prince's residence.

Because of his current status and the political situation in Great Yu, he had to be cautious while traveling. So for this stay in Chang'an, he brought nearly half the staff from his prince's residence to take care of his daily needs.

With outsiders around, he always felt uneasy.

After eating breakfast, not long passed before a palace eunuch arrived. Xiao Ming changed into a purple round-collared qilin robe for a vassal prince, wore a golden fish-shaped ornament at his waist, and put on a two-pearl headband. Then he followed the eunuch to the palace.

Outside the gate, Lu Fei and Luo Xin were already waiting for him.

When they saw Xiao Ming, the two bowed to him.

"How does it feel to stay in the Jinwu Guard camp of the Imperial Guards?" Xiao Ming asked Lu Fei with a smile.

This was Lu Fei's first time in Chang'an, and also his first long trip away from home.

Before Lu Fei could reply, Luo Xin laughed and said, "Your Highness doesn't know—last night, Lu Fei kept his knife under his pillow the whole time. When I went to wake him this morning, I almost got slashed."

Lu Fei snorted and said, "When you're away from home, it's always safer to be careful. I did that so I could jump up and protect Your Highness at any time."

“And yet you still slept like a rock.”

The two started bickering again.

Xiao Ming gently shook his head, ignored them, and instead looked at the officials on Zhuque Avenue.

In Great Yu, most officials walked to court, so early in the morning, you would see them walking in groups, wearing their court robes and heading toward the palace.

As the three were walking, someone suddenly called out, “Luo Xin.”

Xiao Ming turned around and saw a man in a purple official robe walking toward them.

When Luo Xin saw him, he excitedly called out, “Father.” This man was Luo Quan.

Xiao Ming knew Luo Quan as well and said with a smile, “General Luo, it’s been a while.”

“Greetings, Your Highness.” Luo Quan first greeted Xiao Ming. He had seen the three as soon as they came out, so he quickly walked over to say hello.

When Lu Fei found out this was the famous Luo Quan, he looked excited. After Luo Quan greeted Xiao Ming, Lu Fei said, “I am Lu Fei. Greetings, Great General.”

After exchanging greetings, Luo Quan smiled and said, “I’ve long heard about Captain Lu Fei of Qingzhou—brave and unmatched. Seeing you today, I can tell from your presence alone.”

“General flatters me.” Lu Fei scratched his head with joy.

Luo Xin complained, “Dad, why do you never say that about me?”

“Hmph, what’s there to say? Compared to Lu Fei, you’re still far behind. In Qingzhou, you should learn more from Lu Fei.” Luo Quan scolded seriously.

Hearing this, Lu Fei looked even prouder and gave Luo Xin a teasing glance.

After chatting briefly with Lu Fei, Luo Quan walked alongside Xiao Ming as they headed to the palace.

“Your Highness, the great victory in Cangzhou was truly inspiring. When His Majesty gives out rewards, Your Highness will surely be greatly honored.” Luo Quan said as they walked.

Luo Quan was also someone Xiao Ming planned to win over during this trip. Xiao Ming said directly, “I don’t really care about rewards—it’s just some gold and silver. I only hope that this trip to Chang’an will be smooth and that I won’t be given a hard time.”

Luo Quan smiled bitterly, “Your Highness is thinking too simply. With such a big achievement, how could no one make trouble? If you outshine the other princes, a lot of people won’t be happy.”

“So the General already has some ideas about what will happen in court today,” Xiao Ming said with meaning.

“Your Highness left Chang’an at thirteen, so you’re not very familiar with the political scene here. But after staying a while, you’ll understand. Still, Your Highness doesn’t need to worry. This time His Majesty supports you. Just respond as needed in court and don’t bother giving face to those civil officials.”

Xiao Ming nodded, “Thank you for the advice, General.”

After this, Luo Quan looked around carefully, then whispered to Xiao Ming, “Your Highness, today’s court meeting won’t be about rewards, but about the weapon you used in Cangzhou—the cannon!”

Xiao Ming’s expression shifted slightly. Ever since the battle in Cangzhou started, he had known the cannon couldn’t be kept secret.

Although he hadn’t mentioned it in the news, judging by Luo Quan’s words, the officials in Chang’an already clearly knew how powerful the cannon was in this war.

“News really does travel fast in Chang’an. I didn’t expect them to find out about the cannon so quickly.” Xiao Ming said calmly.

Luo Quan smiled and said, “Your Highness, Qingzhou kept the cannon news tightly sealed, but Beishan wouldn’t keep it secret for you. Now, in Shengdu, Beishan is looking for excuses for the loss in Cangzhou. The cannon is one of them. He says the cannon is unmatched in power, spits flames, sounds like thunder, and under its shells, cavalry and horses are smashed. It kills one person every ten steps, and no one survives for a thousand miles.”

“Hahaha...”

Luo Quan’s serious tone suddenly made Xiao Ming burst into laughter.

Looking confused, Luo Quan asked, “Why is Your Highness laughing?”

Luo Xin jumped in, “Father, think about it. Is that even possible? Killing one person every ten steps, no one left alive for a thousand miles. Beishan is clearly exaggerating to shift blame. The cannon is actually similar to a fire tube—just with longer range.”

“Really?” Luo Quan was surprised.

Right now in Chang’an’s political circles, the cannon was being described like some kind of divine weapon. Many generals were eagerly looking forward to it. A lot of people thought the victory in

Cangzhou was entirely because of the cannon, and that if they had it too, they could defeat the barbarians just as easily.

“It is just as Luo Xin said,” Xiao Ming added. “Since the General said this, I’m guessing that in today’s court session, the officials will definitely ask me to hand over the cannon’s technology.”

Luo Quan nodded. This wasn’t just the peace faction—many of the war faction thought the same.

The Great Yu Kingdom had been weak for decades. If the cannon could change their disadvantage against the barbarians, of course they wanted the technology.

After thinking for a moment, Xiao Ming asked, “Is that what the General wants too?”

Luo Quan replied, “No. I only hope the Imperial Guards can get the cannon. As for the other vassal princes—giving them the cannon would be like handing them a sword to threaten the royal family.”