

I. Dynasty 254

Chapter 254: Battle Results

At Cangzhou, the moment the first group of warhorses was brought back by the soldiers, cheers erupted on the city walls.

This signaled that Lu Fei's mission on the grasslands was going well—they had scored their first victory.

But the cheers didn't last long. Scouts soon returned with reports: multiple cavalry forces were converging, a total of around 30,000 riders heading straight for Cangzhou.

"Your Highness, it seems what's meant to come has come. But the nomads still haven't realized our cavalry is behind enemy lines," Zhan Xingchang said.

"It's probably because Lu Fei left no survivors," Xiao Ming guessed.

In missions like this, the number one rule was to leave no one alive. If their presence was discovered, two thousand men would be nothing more than a snack for the nomads' massive armies.

He then turned to Chen Fu. "Prepare for battle!"

"Yes, Your Highness!" Chen Fu answered at once and led the Cangzhou troops to man the trenches.

Luo Xin also called out to the artillery crew, “Everyone stay sharp! We’ve got plenty of ammo this time—fire with everything you’ve got!”

“Yes, sir!” the artillerymen shouted in unison.

According to the scouts’ reports, the nomad forces numbered around 30,000, and they didn’t even bring slave soldiers. Clearly, they thought this would be like past raids—show up, cause chaos, and halt construction on the wall.

Because of that, Xiao Ming wasn’t too worried. Facing a five-hundred-meter-wide trench, cavalry couldn’t charge through. And if they dismounted, they’d be sitting ducks for slaughter.

The nomads hadn’t forgotten the devastating power of the explosive pots either.

Sure enough, that afternoon, the nomad cavalry arrived at the outer edge of the trenches. When they saw the massive fortifications ahead, they came to a halt.

“Guduo, the Great Yu troops look different this time. Something’s off,” a qianfu said to the wanfu, Guduo, who was leading the army.

“These despicable Great Yu dogs, always playing dirty,” Guduo cursed.

Then he added, “The Khan ordered us to stop them from building that wall. What do we do now?”

“We’ll need to bring in the slave army,” the qianfu replied.

Guduo frowned. They had sent cavalry ahead to save time, but summoning the slave army would take at least ten more days.

Besides, the trenches stretched far and wide—cavalry couldn’t cross them, and two hundred meters beyond were catapults loaded with explosive pots, a memory still fresh and terrifying.

As he hesitated, fire lit up the city wall—Xiao Ming had ordered the artillery to fire.

“Take cover!” Guduo shouted as a hundred black cannonballs screamed through the air, growing larger and louder with each passing second.

The nomad cavalry scattered, galloping in all directions to dodge. But even then, some soldiers were hit.

“Damn it!” came the curses and cries of those caught in the barrage. Guduo’s face twisted in fury.

“Why can’t Beishan Taiji hurry up and finish developing our own cannons? Let these Great Yu pigs taste some of their own medicine!” the qianfu shouted.

“Taiji said the cannons are coming soon,” Guduo replied. “That’s why he ordered us to stop them from building this new wall. He believes his cannons will be strong enough to blast it open.”

Another round of fire burst from the city wall. Seeing the defensive trenches and cannon flashes, Guduo finally made his decision.

“Retreat. We’ll regroup and summon the slave army. This wall clearly matters a great deal to the Great Yu Empire. We must report this to Chagatai!”

“Yes, sir,” the qianfu answered, signaling the troops to pull back in an orderly manner.

On the city wall, Luo Xin watched the retreating enemy and muttered, “They’ve been scared out of their wits.”

“Not necessarily,” Xiao Ming replied. “Look at their orderly retreat. They’re not panicked—they’re just avoiding pointless losses. They’ll be back, and next time with more troops.”

For Xiao Ming, building the wall was a do-or-die mission. He had to finish it before the nomads developed their own artillery.

Zhan Xingchang nodded. “That’s why Your Highness launched those raids—to exhaust the enemy and buy time for us.”

Outside the city, the nomads gradually disappeared into the distance. Once back on the open plains, the 30,000 cavalry split into over a dozen smaller groups, returning to their respective clans.

Guduo took 5,000 of his clan's cavalry and rode straight toward Chagatai's camp.

On the way, they passed by a small clan's grazing grounds. Guduo noticed smoke in the distance and frowned. "Send a few men to check that out."

The scouts galloped off and returned shortly after, their faces pale.

"Wanfu, the Keqing Clan has been wiped out! All their people are dead, their livestock slaughtered, and the entire camp burned to the ground!" one of them reported.

"What?!" Guduo's face went ashen, and he spurred his horse forward.

When he reached the site, a horrific scene awaited—charred remains of tents and corpses scattered among burnt-out livestock.

"Who did this?!" Guduo roared, his voice filled with rage and disbelief.

"Could it be the Huyan Clan? They've never liked us," a soldier suggested.

Clan feuds were common on the grasslands, and such massacres were usually the result of inter-clan vengeance.

“No. The Huyan Clan wouldn’t dare.” Guduo’s face darkened. “We must report this to Khan Chagatai immediately.”

He and his men galloped away at full speed. Three hours later, they met Qianfu Kuha riding toward them, his face twisted with fury and grief.

“Guduo! My entire clan is gone—my wives are dead! You have to avenge us!” Kuha shouted, eyes bloodshot.

“What did you say?!” Guduo felt a chill down his spine. “What happened?!”

Kuha gritted his teeth. “After we split up, I returned to my clan. When I got there... it was gone. Burned to the ground.”

Guduo’s eyes narrowed. “Kuha, we have to see Khan. The Keqing Clan was also wiped out. If this wasn’t another tribe, it must’ve been Great Yu soldiers.”

“Great Yu troops? That’s impossible! They’ve never dared come this deep into the grasslands!” Kuha argued.

Guduo recalled Beishan Taiji's warning. "Taiji once said: Never underestimate the Prince of Qi. That Great Yu prince is the most cunning enemy we've ever faced—even more dangerous than those we fought in the west."

TN:

Title / Literal Meaning / Function / Role

Khagan / Great Khan / Supreme ruler of the Khaganate (like emperor)

Taiji / Noble Prince / High-ranking noble, under the Khagan

Qishou / Banner Chief / Leader of a tribe or a division (a "Banner")

Wan Fu / Commander of 10,000 men / Military commander

Qian Fu / Commander of 1,000 men / Subordinate commander