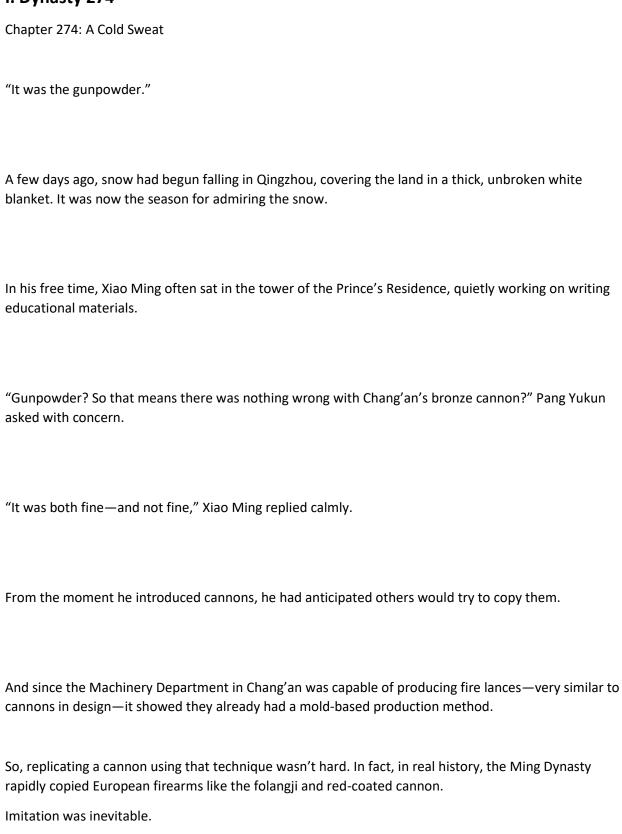
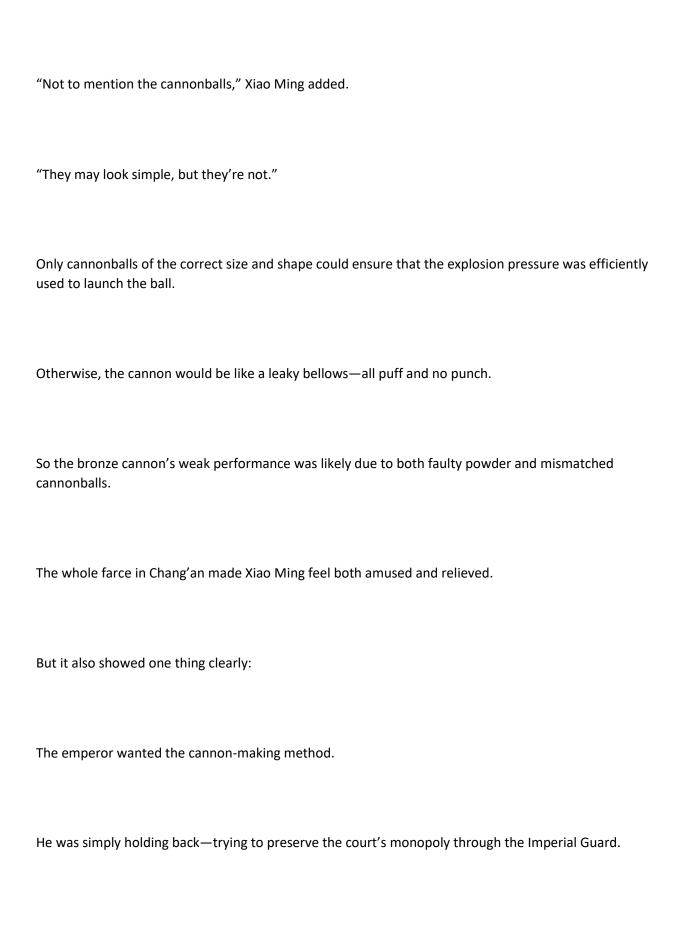
I. Dynasty 274



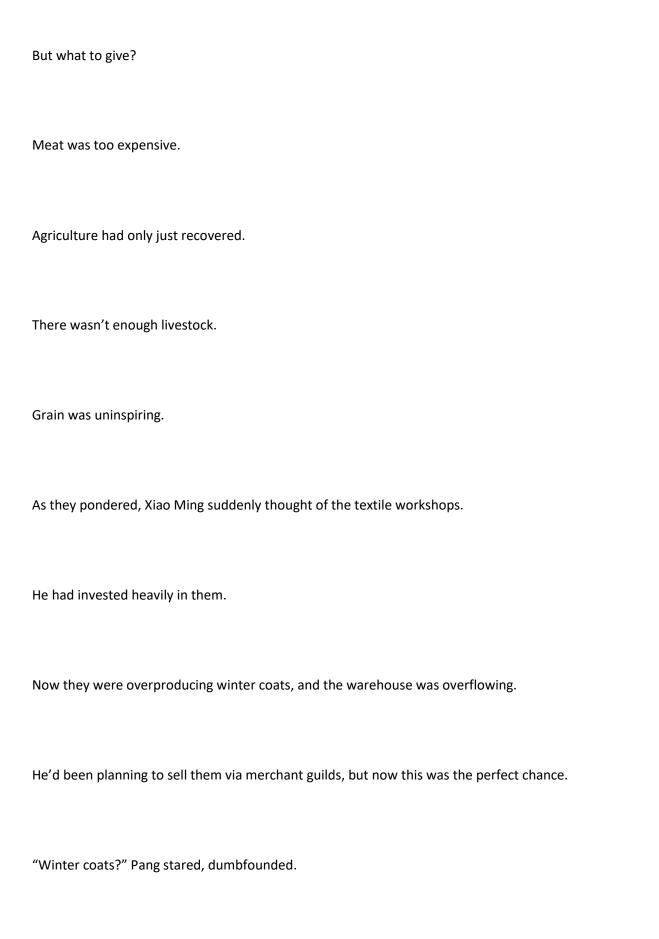
That's why Xiao Ming had released an export version of the cannon. He sold it while deliberately hiding its full capabilities—misleading others into thinking this was what Qingzhou's cannons were truly like.
He wasn't worried.
His own cannons used high-quality steel, with performance far beyond any bronze replica of this era.
Plus, they were cheap and easy to mass-produce.
No matter how hard Chang'an tried, they could never replicate that.
So even if the bronze cannon matched his in performance, it didn't matter—the price alone would crush it.
If Emperor Wenxuan preferred expensive bronze cannons, Xiao Ming wouldn't stop him.
Pang Yukun was still confused.
"Then what's the problem if the cannon itself works?"

"Because even if it looks the same, the range and power are still only about half of ours," Xiao Ming explained.
"And the bronze cannon is so expensive, you could buy five or six of ours for the same price. What do you think they'll choose?"
"As long as Your Highness is willing to sell, they'll always choose the cheaper option." Pang nodded.
Xiao Ming agreed.
"Exactly. Everyone likes things that are cheap and good. But here's the thing—during the bronze cannon test, they used Chang'an's own gunpowder. The formula was wrong, which weakened the shot. That's why the test failed."
"So we got lucky?" Pang chuckled, although a little helpless.
After all, imitation wasn't something to celebrate.
Qingzhou's patent laws only applied within its territory—they had no power outside.

Pang's real concern wasn't imitation itself, but how it might hurt cannon sales.
Once firepower spread, barbarians and other regional princes would also have cannons.
"Let's hope it holds," Pang sighed.
"We'll be fine," Xiao Ming replied confidently.
"Because our cannons are sold with our gunpowder."
Sure, the cannon could be copied—but the gunpowder formula couldn't be guessed by eye.
Plus, we also have granular powder.
The power of his cannon relied on three things; the cannon itself, the gunpowder, and the cannonball.
Chang'an had only cracked one.
Without the other two, their imitation would never be as effective.



Xiao Ming broke into a cold sweat just thinking about it.
Low-tech products really were easier to copy.
He knew he needed to start upgrading soon—so even if others wanted to copy him, they'd fail.
Setting that aside, Xiao Ming and Pang Yukun began discussing the upcoming New Year.
The holiday was only about ten days away.
Pang suggested sending out year-end gifts to the officials of the six prefectures—to show the prince's care and strengthen relations. It was the ancient equivalent of modern-day year-end bonuses.
Xiao Ming agreed.
After all, the officials had worked hard all year.
They deserved a good New Year.



Xiao Ming nodded.
"It'll help support the textile industry too."
It was like how modern governments would use public procurement to help struggling industries.
If he was going to spend money anyway, he might as well spend it on his own businesses.
"And not just coats," he added.
"Soap, perfume, wine—we should include those too."
His eyes lit up.
Pang Yukun burst out laughing.
"Brilliant, Your Highness! We get to give New Year gifts, help merchants earn money, and even funnel some of it back into the treasury. Amazing!"



The fireworks he ordered were nothing like the ones used in Great Yu.
Normally, they only showed the natural color of burning gunpowder.
But Xiao Ming's fireworks contained metal powders—so when they exploded, they would display vibrant, multicolored patterns.
They were going to be absolutely spectacular.