

I. Dynasty 301

Chapter 301: Barbarian Cannons

“Is it really four to five meters long?”

In the main hall, Xiao Ming paced back and forth.

“Yes, there’s no mistake. Also, the barrel is very thick. Your Highness, I believe this cannon is designed for siege warfare,” Wang Xuan said.

“If, as you say, this cannon is for siege use, then it makes sense,” Xiao Ming said, furrowing his brows.

The Urban cannon in history was a famous siege weapon. The Ottoman Empire used it to breach the walls of Constantinople. However, these massive cannons were extremely cumbersome and were assembled piece by piece. They had to be transported in segments and reassembled on the battlefield.

Xiao Ming didn’t quite believe the barbarians would use such a cannon as their main artillery. After all, Bei Shan had already witnessed the range of Qingzhou’s cannons on the steppe.

“However, when I infiltrated the firing range, I saw traces of other types of cannonballs. I suspect the barbarians have more than one type of cannon,” Wang Xuan continued. “I planned to stay undercover and investigate further, but I was exposed and had to escape.”

Xiao Ming nodded. This did indeed fit the barbarian’s character. He couldn’t believe Bei Shan would craft something similar to a “huo huo” cannon again, like last time.

This cannon was certainly meant for sieging.

Wang Xuan, mentioning that he had been betrayed, couldn't help but ask, "Who betrayed you?"

"It was another merchant caravan from the Great Yu Empire—specifically from Zhao Province. They seemed to be probing into the barbarian cannons as well. They discovered us," Wang Xuan said.

"Zhao Province? Sounds like the Zhao King's people," Xiao Ming said coldly. "This is unfortunate for you. Since we sent Zhao Yuanli back, the Zhao King has held a grudge against me. His actions now are just his way of getting back at me. Everyone knows he's not one to forgive easily."

"But this has delayed our progress in learning more about the barbarian cannons," Wang Xuan added, a hint of frustration in his voice.

"It's no problem. I already have a plan. Since the Urbán cannon has appeared, the barbarian cannon technology can't be too advanced," Xiao Ming said confidently.

First of all, based on the color, the barbarians were using bronze cannons, which meant they hadn't mastered the technology for iron cannons.

If that was the case, the barbarians would need to spend a lot of silver on casting cannons. It was an expensive endeavor.

Meanwhile, his own cannons, made from steel and cast in iron molds, could be mass-produced at a low cost. Steel was much cheaper than copper—after all, copper was used as currency in ancient times because it was rare.

Wang Xuan nodded. “But Your Highness, being betrayed by the Zhao King—this is not something I can stomach.”

“Humph. Since Zhao King has no respect for me, I will return the favor. Li San has gathered information on several spies from Zhao Province. You can deal with them—eliminate them all,” Xiao Ming said, his voice chilling.

Wang Xuan sneered. “It seems like Zhao King is desperate over the cannons. He’s sending spies everywhere to steal cannon technology.”

“Naturally. Zhao King has great ambitions. He’s always wanted to replace the Xiao family. Now, with Qingzhou’s cannons and the imperial army equipped with cannons, Zhao King will have to think twice before attacking Chang’an with his Xuanjia Iron Cavalry,” Xiao Ming said.

“After the barbarians’ defeat in Cangzhou, Zhao King must be feeling uneasy,” Wang Xuan laughed.

“But Your Highness, though we were exposed by the barbarians, I didn’t let them off lightly. I exposed their identities too. While the barbarians were tracking us, I made sure they were tracked as well. Now, Zhao King not only has cut off Qingzhou’s spies, but he’s also lost his spies with the barbarians. Eventually, he’ll have no choice but to buy cannons from Qingzhou. When that time comes, don’t hold back,” Wang Xuan said with a wicked grin.

Xiao Ming could imagine how dangerous Wang Xuan's mission had been. Fortunately, the barbarians were different from the Great Yu—they didn't like staying in walled cities. Otherwise, Wang Xuan might not have escaped.

Xiao Ming squinted. Since Zhao Yuanli left, the cannon trade had stalled.

Apart from the imperial court, only the Wei King, the Chu King, the Liang King, and the Yong King had contacted him and placed orders. The armaments workshop was busy producing cannons for export.

These orders had brought him substantial profits, which was why he could afford to make such a big move in Qingzhou.

"Humph. If he's not kind, I won't be merciful," Xiao Ming said bitterly.

Later, in Shengdu

Inside a silver tent on the steppes, Bei Shan sat with his eyes slightly closed.

In front of him stood an Ottoman man, with curly hair, brown eyes, and a prominent nose.

"Are you sure the Urbán cannon will be able to shatter Cangzhou's walls?" Bei Shan asked coldly.

“Lord Bei Shan, please believe me. The Urban cannon has breached the strongest walls before. The walls of the Great Yu Empire will be nothing,” the Ottoman craftsman replied, bowing respectfully.

He had been captured during the barbarian siege of a city, and it was there that he had witnessed cannon production.

Bei Shan nodded. Recently, spies from the Great Yu Empire had appeared in Shengdu, which showed that they were also fearful of the cannon.

“Let’s hope your words are true. If not, I will have your head,” Bei Shan said harshly.

The craftsman trembled at his words. Just then, a guard entered the tent and announced, “Lord, the envoy from Goryeo has arrived.”