

I. Dynasty 311

Chapter 311: The Shock of the Flush Toilet

“Flush toilet? What is that?”

Feng Deshui stared in confusion at the craftsmen installing ceramic pipes inside the restaurant.

Xiao Ming was inwardly pleased. He had started building an underground drainage system to completely improve Qingzhou’s public hygiene.

Back in Europe, it took the Black Death for them to realize the importance of urban sanitation.

Plagues were terrifying. Preventing them began with sanitation—and this was also part of transforming Qingzhou’s urban landscape.

He didn’t want to step outside and see filth in the streets.

After laying sewage pipes, his next step was to introduce flush toilets.

Though the Great Yu Empire had no plastic, ceramic pipes were sturdier and more durable—even better in some ways. Modern systems used plastic simply because it was cheaper.

So for Xiao Ming, creating a modern flush toilet system was not a challenge.

Now that lathes were in use, even metal valves could be produced.

And toilets were traditionally made of ceramic anyway.

“Would Lord Feng be willing to stay another day or two?” Xiao Ming asked instead of answering directly.

Feng, intrigued by what he had seen in Qingzhou, replied,

“To see something new like this, I’d gladly stay a couple more days.”

“Perfect. The first flush toilet will be ready in about two days. You can see it before leaving,” Xiao Ming said.

If the Emperor really moved the capital, Feng’s visit would give Xiao Ming a clear edge in bidding for the construction project.

Feng smiled, curious to see how many tricks this Prince of Qingzhou had up his sleeve.

After arranging accommodations for Feng Deshui, Xiao Ming sent word to the ceramics workshop.

When the roadworks began, he had already given them the toilet design blueprints.

The house servant soon returned with news:

The first ceramic toilet was being fired now and would be ready in two days.

Xiao Ming nodded.

While designing the toilet, he had also specified standardized pipe diameters, based on modern plumbing industry standards.

That way, the toilets could be mass-produced and easily installed without worrying about misfitting pipes in different buildings.

A day later, the workshop delivered a pure white ceramic toilet to the Wei Family Restaurant.

It looked nearly identical to modern toilets, though made entirely of ceramic and copper, giving it a luxurious feel.

Xiao Ming directed the craftsmen to install it in a guest room on the restaurant's first floor.

Each room had already been renovated to include a raised ceramic pipe opening.

The toilet base was aligned and set firmly in place.

Then the inlet pipe behind the toilet was connected to a vertical pipe running through the building.

Once installed, Xiao Ming said,

“Lord Feng, this is the flush toilet.”

As soon as the pipe was connected, water began trickling into the bowl. It was fully functional.

Feng stared in disbelief. He had never seen such a strange thing.

“How do you use it?” he asked.

Xiao Ming chuckled. The toilet had two buttons—pressing either would flush waste down.

He stepped forward and pressed one. Water surged from the tank into the bowl.

“Fascinating!” Feng exclaimed.

“Would Lord Feng like to try it out?” Xiao Ming offered.

Feng nodded eagerly.

Xiao Ming and his men left the room.

Soon after, the sound of flushing echoed from inside.

Feng emerged with a bright smile on his face.

“Your Highness, in all of Great Yu, I admire no one but you!” Feng said, giving a thumbs up.

“You flatter me, Lord Feng. This is just a small gadget,” Xiao Ming replied modestly.

“No, Your Highness is too humble. With talent like this, there’s no way you won’t be involved in building the new capital,” Feng said sincerely.

“But where does the toilet water come from?”

In modern times, flush toilets were powered by running water. But in the Great Yu Empire, that wasn’t so easy.

“Of course, one can always flush manually. But since I want the Wei Family Restaurant to be the most comfortable in the empire, I came up with something better. Did you notice the tower next to the restaurant?”

Feng recalled seeing a new structure that resembled a sealed watchtower on the way in—like a big box.

He nodded.

“That tower holds water. Each day, the restaurant workers carry buckets up and fill the tank. A ceramic pipe leads down to the rooftop’s main vertical pipe, and gravity brings the water down to flush the toilets.

This setup will have many more uses later, but sadly, Lord Feng must leave soon,” Xiao Ming said with a smirk.

Feng’s heart itched.

Xiao Ming had hooked him completely.

Feng loved cleanliness—and this toilet system was exactly his kind of thing.

He sighed. The system only worked with matching plumbing and a water tower.

“Sigh, Your Highness. After seeing all this, how am I supposed to return to regular life?”

There was even toilet paper next to the bowl. In the palace, they used silk—but this was excellent, especially for a regular restaurant.

Seeing his expression, Xiao Ming laughed heartily.

If someone like Feng Deshui—a man used to palace luxury—was this impressed, the average customer would love it even more.

On the way back to the palace, Feng chatted nonstop about sewage pipes, still full of excitement.

But duty called, and he eventually had to return to report back to the Emperor, full of both regret and admiration.

“Your Highness, the restaurant has toilets now. When will our palace get some too?”

Ziyuan and Lu Luo, who had followed the whole time, were excited after seeing the flush toilet for themselves.

“Don’t worry. The pipes under the palace aren’t ready yet. That setup was just for Lord Feng’s experience. Once everything’s in place, the palace will have them too,” Xiao Ming said with a smile.

“Yes! And when Your Highness marries, if the pipes are ready, your princess will be as amazed as Lord Feng!” Lu Luo giggled.

“Of course! Honestly, besides having more people, Chang’an isn’t even better than Qingzhou anymore,” Ziyuan added proudly.

Without realizing it, they had begun to see Qingzhou as their true home.

Xiao Ming shook his head gently.

Urban development had only just begun. Qingzhou would only grow more comfortable from here.