

## **I. Dynasty 314**

### Chapter 314: Arming the Army with Flintlocks

#### Qingzhou Army Camp

It was lunchtime, and the Qingzhou soldiers were sitting in rows in the mess hall, enjoying their meal.

Ever since the Qingzhou Army's reforms, they now had a proper dining facility.

After hiring logistical support troops, all meals were handled by the logistics team.

"Ah, it's fried locusts again! I can't get enough of them!"

Lu Luo plopped into a seat, grabbed a steamed bun, and reached for a handful of crispy locusts.

Even though conditions had improved in Qingzhou, soldiers still mostly ate steamed buns and flatbread. Getting two or three vegetable dishes was already good—meat was rare, since feeding 20,000 mouths was no easy task.

But ever since Li Kaiyuan started delivering fried locusts, the soldiers could at least enjoy something tasty every now and then.

"Our prince is a genius," said Luo Xin while munching happily.

“Lu Luo, how did His Highness even figure out you could eat locusts like this? Amazing!”

Niu Ben shook his head, a little ashamed.

He had always eaten and lived with the troops and expected the same from his officers. He thought he was already close to the people—but then Xiao Ming himself had fried locusts in the eastern market for the commoners.

That had become the talk of the town.

As they ate, a guard came in to report,

“Commander, His Highness is here.”

Niu Ben quickly shoved a few more bites into his mouth.

Lu Fei and Luo Xin did the same, then rushed outside.

“It must be the first batch of flintlocks!”

Lu Fei said excitedly.

Luo Xin, feeling a little jealous, mumbled,

“No matter how good the flintlock is, it’s still not better than a cannon.”

“Tch!”

Lu Fei rolled his eyes at him.

The three men reached the camp entrance and saw Xiao Ming followed by a row of wagons, each carrying crates.

“Your Highness, have the flintlocks arrived?”

Niu Ben asked eagerly.

More than Lu Fei, he had been waiting anxiously—because Xiao Ming had said these rifles were the key to defeating the barbarians.

“Five hundred rifles. This is the first batch,” Xiao Ming said, smiling.

“The military workshop says they can deliver 2,000 more next month. Within a year, we’ll equip the entire Qingzhou Army.”

“That’s great!”

Lu Fei grinned.

“Our discipline is excellent. Our formations are solid. All we need to do is train the troops to handle them.”

Xiao Ming nodded.

“Commander Niu, this batch goes to the Vanguard Battalion. Let the men eat first, then gather them. I’ll give a demonstration.”

“Your Highness, I’ve already learned from you at the workshop. No need to trouble yourself,” Lu Fei offered eagerly—hoping to show off in front of the soldiers.

“That won’t do.”

Xiao Ming chuckled.

“Last time was just a test. I loaded the gun casually. Today is formal training—we can’t cut corners.”

Niu Ben and Lu Fei exchanged a glance, both a little embarrassed.

They had even bragged about knowing how to use the flintlock—turns out they’d done it wrong.

The 500 brand-new rifles were unloaded.

Soldiers carried them to the training ground, where the Vanguard Battalion was already assembled.

They had heard that they would be getting new weapons today, and everyone was flushed with excitement.

Box after box of flintlocks was lined up in front of them, but Xiao Ming didn’t distribute them immediately.

He wanted to give a proper briefing first.

As he had done at the workshop, Xiao Ming handed one rifle each to Lu Fei and Niu Ben.

“Before you are flintlock rifles. From now on, these weapons will be your lifeline on the battlefield. Treat them with care—your survival will depend on them. Now, let me explain the structure and functions of each part.”

Xiao Ming went over the entire rifle, detailing every component and its use.

The soldiers listened with full attention, afraid to miss a single word.

Once he finished the explanation, Xiao Ming stood at an angle and began demonstrating the proper loading procedure.

“Watch carefully. First, tilt the rifle at a 45-degree angle.

Pull back the hammer.

Open the flash pan.

Take out a cartridge.

Bite it open.

Pour a little gunpowder into the flash pan.

Close the pan.

Pour the rest of the powder and the paper-wrapped ball into the barrel.

Use the ramrod to tamp the powder and ball down.

Return the ramrod.

Then shoulder the rifle and wait for the firing order.”

Lu Fei and Niu Ben followed each step precisely.

“Fire!” Xiao Ming called.

“Bang! Bang!”

Two loud gunshots rang out, white smoke bursting into the air.

The Vanguard Battalion was stunned. The sound alone was terrifying.

“Awesome, right?” Lu Fei grinned.

“These things can pierce armor from 80 meters away. The barbarians’ armor won’t save them!”

Luo Xin, now itching with envy, asked,

“Your Highness, shouldn’t the artillery unit get flintlocks too? Who’s going to protect us on the battlefield?”

“Don’t worry, Lieutenant Luo. I’ll assign guards to protect you—but you better follow my orders to the letter,” Lu Fei boasted, rifle in hand.

Luo Xin rolled his eyes at him.

Xiao Ming ignored their banter and turned to Niu Ben.



“Commander Niu, hand out the rifles.”

Niu Ben nodded.

“Form a line and come forward one by one. Don’t play with the rifles—wait for instructions.”

“Yes!” the soldiers shouted in unison.

All 500 soldiers in the Vanguard Battalion were formally equipped with flintlocks.

They stood tall, rifles held upright by their feet. Together, they looked disciplined and powerful.

As he looked at this modern-style army, Xiao Ming felt a new sense of security rise in his heart.

Then he shouted,

“Stand tighter. Follow my commands step by step!”

He and the others stepped to the side.

Then, Xiao Ming ordered the troops into firing formation.

Once everyone was in place, he issued a series of commands and finally yelled:

“Fire!