

## **I. Dynasty 341**

### Chapter 341: Rebel Army Surrounds the City

Qi Guangyi and his cavalry stopped in front of an empty village.

Since they had left Yunzhou, they had been searching for disaster victims in Jizhou and guiding them to Yunzhou and Qingzhou.

They had done well these past few days and helped many people.

It was already noon, and Qi Guangyi was getting ready to let the soldiers rest and feed their horses.

Just then, a scout came rushing from afar. His face was full of worry as he said, "Captain, we found a large group of rebels about five miles away. It looks like they're heading toward Yunzhou City."

Qi Guangyi had just taken a steamed bun from his bag, but he quickly put it back and shouted to the soldiers, "Everyone, gather up and follow me!"

With that, he turned his horse and followed the scout toward the nearby village of Guting, which was marked on the map.

The cavalry quickly got ready. Niu Ben had given him this many cavalry just in case they ran into rebels.

Now, there was no time to worry about anything else. The Qingzhou army had already gone to Jizhou. If Yunzhou City was surrounded by rebels, the Qingzhou army would lose their supply route.

And those hungry rebels wouldn't care whose supply line it was.

The soldiers mounted up and followed Qi Guangyi to Guting Village.

When they arrived, they all went silent. On the road to Yunzhou City, crowds of rebels were moving slowly.

The rebel line stretched as far as they could see, from the south to the north, making their skin crawl.

"Captain, look. That's the Azure Dragon King's flag," a soldier said.

Qi Guangyi looked through his telescope. Sure enough, the flags of the Azure Dragon King were everywhere in the marching line. At the front were common people carrying all kinds of weapons, and at the back were others carrying bags or pushing wheelbarrows.

But the carts had very little food.

"There must be three or four hundred thousand of them," one general said with worry. "Yunzhou City isn't like Cangzhou City. Its walls are only five meters high, and there are fewer than ten thousand guards. What should we do?"

Qi Guangyi frowned deeply. "Send someone to inform His Highness and the governor right away. These people are too dangerous. The Azure Dragon King is using the people as his shield. No one knows what he's really thinking. If he is loyal, maybe we can talk him into letting the people lay down their weapons and follow His Highness. But if he has evil intentions, then we're in big trouble."

The other generals nodded.

Qi Guangyi paused, then said, "We're returning to Yunzhou City now, just in case."

He turned his horse around and took another road back to Yunzhou.

A day later, the news reached the governor's mansion.

When Xiao Ming and Zhan Xingchang heard the report, they were shocked.

"Your Highness, if three hundred thousand rebels surround Yunzhou City, Governor Niu's supply line will be in danger. We must make sure Yunzhou stays safe."

Xiao Ming also understood how serious the situation was.

No one really knew what kind of person the Azure Dragon King was—not even Prince Yong. They only knew that he had taken over several cities with rebels and opened food stores to help disaster victims.

Because of this, more and more people from Jizhou were joining him. It was said that his army now had five or six hundred thousand people.

“I understand. But we don’t know what he really wants. If he plans to take our cities and give away the food again, what do we do?”

Zhan Xingchang said seriously, “If the Azure Dragon King means harm, then he’s a traitor. While Your Highness is leading troops to fight the barbarians, he’s heading toward Yunzhou City. That’s treason!”

Xiao Ming nodded. If the Azure Dragon King ignored the greater good and only cared about his own comfort and power, then Xiao Ming would not show mercy.

Over the past month, the machinery department had delivered another three thousand flintlock rifles. Xiao Ming said to Zhan Xingchang, “Yunzhou City is very important. We can’t wait. Tomorrow we’ll lead three thousand gunners to Yunzhou.”

Although the rifles were newly delivered and the soldiers had only trained for about a week, they weren’t new recruits—they were veterans from the Battle of Cangzhou.

The next day, Xiao Ming and Zhan Xingchang personally led the troops toward Yunzhou.

Because they were infantry, it took three days to get there. Based on Qi Guangyi's message, the Azure Dragon King's army was about to arrive too.

Once at Yunzhou, Xiao Ming checked the city's defenses. There were six thousand local soldiers, five thousand cavalry led by Qi Guangyi, and his own three thousand gunners—fourteen thousand troops in total.

Both the cavalry and gunners were elite, and the local troops weren't weak either. Xiao Ming felt a bit more confident.

"But the city walls are too low," he muttered.

Looking at the five-meter-high walls of the small city, Xiao Ming frowned. Though Yunzhou was a small place, it had now become the lifeline of their supply route.

It was already evening, and reports were coming in more and more often. Each one said the rebels were getting closer.

As the sun sank below the horizon, Xiao Ming saw the massive wave of people arriving.

The crowd stretched to the horizon. From above, they looked like an army of ants on the move.

The sight put huge pressure on the city's defenders.

Xiao Ming and Zhan Xingchang exchanged a look—both of them were deeply worried.

The people stopped about ten meters outside the city. The wide road was packed with armed civilians. Their faces were cold and expressionless as they stared at the city wall.

“Soldier sir, open the gates. Didn’t you say Yunzhou was taking in the people? We’re from Jizhou and starving. Let us in for a bite to eat.”

A tall young man with a hoarse voice stepped forward, resting a shovel-like weapon on his shoulder.

“You can come in, but you have to drop your weapons and enter in small groups,” Qi Guangyi shouted back.

“Soldier sir, these weapons are for fighting corrupt officials. What are you so afraid of? Enough talk, open the gate. These hundreds of thousands of people are all counting on eating tonight.”

The young man sniffed and his eyes turned sharp.

Qi Guangyi frowned back at him. His men had fought the northern barbarians directly—how could they be scared of a group of rebels?

He was about to speak when Xiao Ming suddenly raised his voice: "Where is the Azure Dragon King? Can he come speak to me?"

"The king? Who are you?" the young man asked.

"I am Prince Qi, Xiao Ming," Xiao Ming replied loudly. He didn't want to fight his own people unless there was no choice.

"Prince Qi?" The young man looked shocked.