

I. Dynasty 352

Chapter 352: Airdropped Intel

White clouds drifted gently across a bright blue sky.

In the clear weather, a grey hot air balloon slowly floated toward Jizhou City.

After tossing down three explosive canisters earlier, Liang Yubin and He Cheng had laughed the whole way. But after flying several more li, they realized a serious problem.

“This is bad. So far, every wind current we’ve found is blowing north. Looks like we’ll have to keep going much farther,” Liang Yubin said with worry.

If that continued, they would be forced to drift northward. Even though they’d brought a good amount of tung oil this time, once the fuel ran out, they’d have to land.

And from what they’d seen, the whole area to the north was filled with barbarian camps. If they landed there, they’d be caught for sure.

He Cheng looked tense as well. “We don’t have a choice. We have to keep flying. I just hope we’re not too late to deliver the intel.”

Liang Yubin nodded seriously.

They had been given an important mission and were determined to complete it.

It wasn't just about getting titles—they knew that if Jizhou lost this battle badly, both the Qingzhou army and the imperial guards would suffer greatly.

And that would cause the Great Yu Empire's royal court to fall even further into decline.

Calming down, the two men worked on adjusting the balloon's altitude by heating and cooling the air, searching for a different wind layer.

They'd faced this problem before in Qingzhou. Sometimes, the whole area would have only one wind direction. Finding a new air current could take a long time.

As they floated and searched, the barbarians sent out cavalry to follow the balloon from below.

One barbarian scout was already rushing toward Beishan Taiji's silver command tent.

Seeing how the barbarian riders were running even faster than they were floating, Liang and He could only sigh helplessly. 'Of all days, today had to be clear and calm.'

Inside the silver tent...

Beishan had just received news from Chagatai.

“The Qingzhou army has arrived? And a flying monster in the sky?” Beishan shouted in anger.

“Taiji, the Qingzhou soldiers have fire-spitting weapons. Our charging troops were all killed by those,” the scout reported anxiously with his head lowered.

Beishan’s eyes shifted across the map hanging inside his command tent.

Out of his 150,000 cavalry, 80,000 were stationed in Fencheng. Right now, the 30,000 Qingzhou soldiers in the city were coordinating with the imperial guards outside. If he sent reinforcements now, they might attack together. Beishan wasn’t too worried about the imperial guards—but he was cautious of those strange weapons from the Qingzhou army.

The remaining 70,000 cavalry were led by Chagatai, who was currently trying to block the incoming reinforcements from the imperial army.

To fight over the supply route, Chagatai had already sent 30,000 cavalry, but they were being held down by both the imperial and Qingzhou reinforcements.

If he asked Chagatai to send more troops now, the imperial infantry might break through and move into Jizhou.

On top of that, Prince Yong had 120,000 troops stationed inside Jizhou City.

Beishan narrowed his eyes at the map of the region from Jizhou to Fencheng. He wasn't worried about Prince Yong. In his view, even if a battle broke out outside the city, Prince Yong wouldn't lift a finger to help.

Right now, the Great Yu Empire was falling apart. Each regional prince only cared about their own interests, and Prince Yong was no different.

Only the Prince of Qi was an exception. He kept fighting the Golden Khanate to the bitter end. King Kang used to be like that too—but now he was dead and buried.

"Tell Chagatai to pull back his cavalry and wait here for orders." Beishan pointed to a spot ten li south of Jizhou. "We'll wipe out the imperial army right here first."

He paused, then added, "Prepare the cannons. As soon as the imperial reinforcements arrive, have the slave soldiers charge. Fire the cannons to break their formations. Once their lines are scattered, send in the heavy cavalry for a full assault. We'll crush them right here."

"Yes, sir!" the barbarian generals shouted, then hurried off.

Beishan stepped out of the tent and looked up at the blue sky, then turned to the bronze cannons set up in the camp.

He gently stroked one of the cannons, a cruel smile forming on his lips. He hadn't forgotten the shame of being bombarded by Qingzhou cannons at Cangzhou, completely unable to strike back.

But now he had returned—with 250 cannons of his own. He would bury the imperial army and the Qingzhou army under the fire and steel of the Golden Khanate.

"Great Yu Empire... your land will belong to me. Your riches and your women will all belong to me," Beishan muttered, his ambition swelling.

He had named these cannons Mighty Cannons. He'd personally seen their power and believed they would break the imperial army with ease.

And from what Chagatai reported, the imperial army hadn't brought any cannons this time.

Beishan quickly realized why.

The peace-faction officials in the empire still held great influence. They had long been dissatisfied with Luo Quan, the general. This time, they must have blocked him from bringing artillery.

Thinking of this, Beishan let out a cold laugh.

To him, those peace-loving officials were cowards. But sometimes, those cowards were even more useful than an army of 100,000.

“Taiji, look!”

While he was deep in thought, noise erupted in the camp. The barbarian soldiers all pointed toward the sky.

Beishan looked up and his expression changed drastically. A large grey balloon was floating toward their camp, and he could vaguely see two figures on it.

If Chagatai hadn’t already said it belonged to the Qingzhou army, some of the soldiers might have mistaken it for a god and started worshiping it.

“What is that?”

“A god has come from the sky!”

“...”

Seeing the soldiers panic, Beishan shouted, “That’s a Qingzhou balloon! Everyone stay calm!”

His voice brought order, but the soldiers still stared at the strange flying object as it passed just outside the camp.

On the balloon, Liang Yubin and He Cheng looked annoyed.

“If we were a bit closer, we could’ve dropped a few bombs on them,” Liang grumbled.

The wind kept carrying them north, and although they had come across the barbarian base near Jizhou, there was no wind pushing them directly over it.

Liang raised his spyglass and pointed. “Look at that silver tent. That must be the command tent of their Taiji. What a waste. If we could drop a bomb right on top of it, we might be awarded noble titles.”

He Cheng’s eyes lit up, but then he sighed. “Too bad this balloon is so hard to control. You can’t choose where to go at all.”

The two floated helplessly past the barbarian camp and finally reached the skies above Jizhou City.

From above, they saw that the city was packed with soldiers, especially along the walls.

Liang Yubin took a prepared message wrapped in paper and tied it to a stone. As they floated over the wall, he dropped it.

