

I. Dynasty 357

Chapter 357: The Decisive Battle

The cold north wind swept across the battlefield as Luo Quan, aboard the hot air balloon, took in the entire scene below.

The signal officer continuously sent flag signals, communicating with the Qingzhou army inside Fencheng. Once they confirmed that Niu Ben would launch an attack on the west gate, Luo Quan made his move—he would launch a fierce assault on the north gate to draw the barbarians' main forces there.

“Advance!”

With a single command, the entire formation of the Jinwu Guards began to push forward. Their thunderous footsteps echoed across the battlefield.

Based on the barbarian cavalry's formation, Luo Quan deployed a matching counter-formation.

The barbarians had clearly concentrated their strongest troops in the center. Their goal was to break through with overwhelming force, then use flanking cavalry to encircle the enemy.

To counter this, Luo Quan positioned two groups of 10,000 cavalry on both flanks to guard his sides, while putting the Qingzhou army in the center. As a precaution, he also added 10,000 cavalry behind them as reinforcement.

On the barbarian side, 60,000 cavalry and 60,000 slave soldiers had assembled.

Because they had to defend against possible attacks from both the Jizhou army and the Qingzhou troops in Fencheng, Beishan had pulled back some troops for defense.

As soon as the Jinwu Guards began moving, the barbarian army also advanced.

The two sides steadily approached each other across the vast battlefield. When they were just 300 meters apart, a loud barbarian war horn echoed—and suddenly, their cavalry charged.

In the center, 2,000 barbarian cavalry charged straight toward the neatly formed Qingzhou musketeers.

These were the same 2,000 cavalry who had once fled in defeat from Yunzou City. Chagatai had given them one last chance: break through the Great Yu army's center, or die trying.

Seeing that the central force was made up of Qingzhou soldiers, these 2,000 warriors had already resolved themselves—they could die, but they would not lose their honor.

“Kill!”

The 2,000 cavalry surged forward, driving their warhorses madly at the Qingzhou line.

But the musketeers remained calm, staring down the incoming cavalry. These men were hardened veterans, trained to withstand anything on the battlefield.

“Ready!”

At the command, the musketeers raised their guns in unison.

When the enemy entered within eighty paces, the musketeers pulled their triggers.

Bang! Bang!

Smoke and fire exploded from the barrels. The charging cavalymen were thrown from their horses—hundreds fell in that first volley.

Then the second row of musketeers stepped forward and fired—another hundred collapsed. Then the third row followed.

“Fall back!”

After the third volley, Zhu Sansi immediately ordered the musketeers to retreat. He was leading this 3,000-man musket unit.

As they pulled back, the Jinwu Guards' pikemen stepped forward. They kneeled and raised their spears in a tight wall.

The eighty paces between them and the enemy closed in an instant. There was no time for a fourth volley—the pikemen had to hold the line.

Zhan Xingchang observed the unusual behavior of the enemy cavalry—then his eyes widened in shock.

The barbarians had just blindfolded their horses.

Luo Hong saw it too and turned pale. "These are death squads!"

Zhan's expression turned grave. Horses would normally stop when faced with sharp objects—this was why tightly packed spear formations were so effective against cavalry.

But now, with their vision blocked, the horses couldn't see anything and charged forward blindly—this was a full-on suicide attack.

The pikemen saw this too and were visibly shaken. Some trembled, but none backed away. They closed their eyes and braced for impact.

In the Jinwu Guards, Luo Quan was their faith. And they knew—behind them stood their homeland, their families.

Boom!

The full-speed cavalry slammed into the spear wall. The impact flung many soldiers backward.

But the spears hit back just as hard, stabbing through horse after horse.

Horses screamed, soldiers shouted and fought—the entire battlefield erupted into chaos. In the front line, not a single pikeman survived the suicidal charge.

“Kill!”

The rear ranks saw their comrades die and went red with rage. They lunged forward, stabbing fallen barbarians without hesitation.

The barbarian riders rolled to their feet, wild-eyed, slashing back with their blades.

Hand-to-hand combat broke out instantly.

Then Zhu Sansi noticed another wave—the barbarian slave soldiers were charging at them now.

His heart sank. The spear wall had been broken—if these slave troops got into the fight now, the entire formation would collapse.

And that was exactly what the barbarians wanted. The heavy cavalry was just waiting to follow up and crush them.

“Bayonet charge—go!”

Zhu Sansi shouted at the top of his lungs.

The musketeers raised their rifles and rushed forward in formation. The stunned barbarian riders turned—only to be stabbed through by a wall of bayonets before they could react.

With the front cleared, Zhu Sansi quickly reformed the musket lines.

“Ready... Fire!”

Bang! Bang! Fire spat from the muzzles, and row after row of slave soldiers fell to the ground.

Up in the hot air balloon, Luo Quan saw the entire battlefield unfold.

His heart was heavy. The 2,000 suicidal cavalry had already taken thousands of his soldiers with them.

Across the field, soldiers on both sides had locked into brutal combat.

Screams, curses, blood, the cries of men and horses—it was like a hellish battlefield stretching for miles.

Though the Great Yu soldiers fought bravely, the barbarian cavalry had the edge—they tore through the field like a storm, trampling many to death.

Woo—woo—

A war horn blasted again. Luo Quan looked toward the barbarian camp and his face changed.

A fresh cavalry force was rushing in from the direction of Jizhou—it was clear Beishan had sent in reinforcements.

The two sides had been evenly matched. With these new reinforcements, they had no chance of winning. Cold sweat formed on Luo Quan's back.

Boom! Boom!

Just then, the barbarian cannons opened fire, blasting into the densest clusters of Great Yu troops. Luo Quan's worry deepened.

BOOM!

An even louder explosion rang out—from the direction of Fencheng.

He looked that way and suddenly smiled—Niu Ben had begun the attack on the west.

“Niu Ben... it's all up to you now,” he muttered. Every fallen soldier tore at his heart.

Fencheng, West Gate

The moment the Qingzhou army opened the gate, Luo Xin unleashed their cannons with full force.

The barbarian cannons at the west gate scrambled to respond, but the Qingzhou army was faster. Before they could react, a dozen cannonballs roared toward them.

Aaaah!

Screams echoed. Cannonballs smashed into enemy artillery, knocking them over. Soldiers hit by shrapnel were hurled backward into their own ranks.

With the enemy cannons suppressed, Lu Fei led 3,000 cavalry directly at the enemy artillery positions.