

I. Dynasty 368

Chapter 368: Open the Granary and Share the Food

“Slave soldiers?”

Xiao Ming and Niu Ben both looked surprised.

Lei Ming nodded. “These slave soldiers aren’t from Youzhou. The barbarians brought them from beyond the pass. They were left behind to control Youzhou City. But when the barbarians retreated, they abandoned them.”

“How many are there?” Niu Ben asked, ready to lead his cavalry into the city to wipe them out.

“Not many, maybe four or five hundred. I already attacked them and they scattered. Looks like the barbarians didn’t tell them that Beishan lost the war, or maybe they didn’t expect Shanhai Pass to fall,” Lei Ming said calmly.

Xiao Ming frowned and said, “This is our chance. Arrest all the slave soldiers.”

Niu Ben agreed and immediately charged into the city with Lei Ming and their cavalry.

These slave soldiers acted as puppet troops in Youzhou, helping the barbarians rule. Now that the real soldiers were here, Xiao Ming could use them to show the people that barbarian rule was over by executing them in public.

Not long after, Niu Ben returned to report that all remaining barbarian soldiers in the city had been captured.

Only then did Xiao Ming enter Youzhou City with him.

Just like cities in the Great Yu Empire, Youzhou had many residential districts. But now, many residents were peeking over the district walls, unsure of what was happening.

Not long ago, the barbarian troops suddenly left Youzhou City, leaving only slave soldiers behind.

This made things very strange for the locals. People were nervous and confused.

Soon after, most slave soldiers also fled. Only a few remained and still bullied the people. But since there were no guards at the gates, people began to enter and leave the city freely again.

Today, they saw cavalry that clearly didn't belong to the barbarians entering the city.

As Xiao Ming looked at the people along the road, a sudden sadness welled up in his chest.

What kind of suffering had these people gone through in the past ten years? Their faces were filthy, clothes dark and full of patches and holes—worse than beggars.

Their bodies were skinny and weak. If not for their yellow skin and black eyes, Xiao Ming would have thought they were famine victims in Africa.

Niu Ben kept his lips tightly closed and his face was dark with anger. His feelings were clear.

“Your Highness, we caught a hundred of them alive,” Lei Ming said through gritted teeth. Then he kicked one of the slave soldiers fiercely. “How dare you eat so well! How dare you!”

The cavalrymen, all from the Guan Ning Iron Cavalry, were heartbroken to see their fellow Youzhou people in such a pitiful state.

Their grief quickly turned into rage—and they took it out on the captured slave soldiers.

At first, Xiao Ming planned to execute the slave soldiers in front of the people to declare that Youzhou City had been reclaimed.

But now, he realized that wasn’t what the people needed.

What they needed was not a political statement—but a bowl of rice porridge. A steamed bun.

Their blank eyes showed they didn’t care who had come.

“We’ll transfer some food from Cangzhou. Let’s feed the people first,” Xiao Ming said. Then he told Lei Ming, “Hold the slave soldiers for now. Interrogate them about the city.”

Lei Ming nodded and left with the prisoners.

“From the moment we entered until we captured the soldiers, the people just stood there watching silently. No one spoke. No one smiled. Your Highness, they’re like walking corpses now,” Niu Ben said after a long silence.

Xiao Ming was from the modern world. He had seen poor people and disaster victims in Qingzhou, but he had never seen people like this.

These people were like the prisoners in old war documentaries—silent and lifeless.

“They’ve suffered under the barbarians for too long. It’ll take time for them to recover,” Xiao Ming sighed.

Niu Ben nodded. “You’re right, Your Highness. Right now, they’re like frightened birds. But once word spreads, they’ll slowly begin to understand. Many of them surely remember Prince Kang.”

That made Xiao Ming recall something Lei Ming once told him: to avoid bearing barbarian children, some people in Youzhou even killed their own daughters if they were born from the barbarians’ ‘first night right.’

Xiao Ming said, “In that case, let’s spread the news about the barbarian defeat first.”

He called Lei Ming over and whispered some instructions.

Lei Ming nodded and sent a hundred cavalymen in all directions.

The riders loudly shouted:

“People of Youzhou! The barbarians have been driven out by the army of the Great Yu Empire! We are soldiers of Great Yu! You don’t have to be afraid anymore—the army of Great Yu has returned! You will never suffer under the barbarians again! Even the spirit of Prince Kang can finally rest in peace!”

The riders waved their banners and repeated the message again and again.

As this message reached the people, the older folks of Youzhou began to react.

At first, they were still quiet. Then they started whispering to each other. Gradually, their expressions began to change.

They still didn’t dare to come close.

But as the message continued to spread, more and more people gathered from a distance, staring at Xiao Ming's group like frightened deer.

Xiao Ming and Niu Ben exchanged a look. It seemed using Prince Kang's name really worked.

At that moment, Lei Ming finished interrogating the slave soldiers.

"Your Highness, the prisoners said there's a granary in the city with 20,000 dan of food. The barbarians didn't have time to burn it when they left!" Lei Ming reported excitedly.

"Excellent! Looks like I finally get to open a granary and share food!" Xiao Ming laughed.

Niu Ben grinned too. "20,000 dan should feed the people of Youzhou for at least ten days."

Then they followed Lei Ming to search the city. Soon they found the granary.

"The slave soldiers said the barbarians forced the people to farm around the city, then took all the grain and gave the people only husks and bran to eat," Lei Ming said bitterly.

As he spoke, soldiers opened the granary doors. Inside, piles of rice and wheat were stacked high.

“Go tell the people—they can come collect food!” Xiao Ming said, smiling brightly.