

I. Dynasty 375

Chapter 375: News Shocks Chang'an

In the early morning, a messenger rushed into Chang'an, which was shrouded in a thin mist. As the sound of galloping hooves echoed on the cobblestone roads, the news of the Qingzhou Army's victory at Shanhai Pass quickly spread.

"Great victory at Shanhai Pass! The Qingzhou Army has recaptured the mighty Shanhai Pass!"

"Shanhai Pass has been retaken!"

"..."

The messenger continued spreading the news, heading straight to the imperial palace. He had set off from Qingzhou five days ago and had finally arrived in Chang'an.

The morning court session was about to start, and officials were walking in groups along the Zhuque Avenue in Chang'an.

As the messenger passed by the officials, the news naturally reached their ears. Immediately, a ripple of surprise spread across the previously calm avenue.

"Lord Zhang, did I hear correctly? The Qingzhou Army has retaken Shanhai Pass?" one official in a red robe asked in disbelief.

Lord Zhang, also uncertain, turned to ask a nearby colleague, “Lord Liu, did this messenger say they’ve recaptured Shanhai Pass?”

“Yes, the Qingzhou Army has retaken Shanhai Pass, but how is that possible?” Lord Liu said with a look of disbelief. “Even though the barbarians were defeated in Jizhou, their forces were still strong. Shanhai Pass is an impenetrable fortress. Even an army of 500,000 couldn’t breach it. How could 30,000 soldiers from Prince Qi manage it?”

An officer passing by overheard and scoffed, “Lord Liu, you clearly don’t understand. Shanhai Pass is indeed hard to defend against the barbarians, but it’s much easier to attack from the inside. The barbarians were recently defeated, Beishan was injured, and their morale was low. They likely abandoned Shanhai Pass.”

“That makes sense,” Lord Zhang nodded in agreement. “If Jizhou was a big victory, then His Majesty must be extremely pleased. And if he hears that Shanhai Pass has been reclaimed, he’ll be overjoyed. I’m sure he’ll praise Prince Qi immensely during the morning court session.”

“Exactly, the Qingzhou Army played a major role in the victory in Jizhou, and now they’ve reclaimed Shanhai Pass. The winds in court will soon change. You two should be cautious,” Lord Zhang smiled as he spoke.

“What do you mean by that?” the other two officials asked, confused.

“It’s simple. Prince Qi has achieved great things in just two years. He’ll soon be a favorite of the emperor. He’s powerful, and no other prince has as many accomplishments. The court’s direction will shift soon. It’s best to act accordingly,” Lord Zhang said, sighing as he walked forward.

The two officials exchanged looks and nodded. The victory at Shanhai Pass made Prince Qi a crucial figure in the court.

Even if he were just a regular general, taking Shanhai Pass would make him an important person in the capital.

As the three of them discussed, more sensitive officials had already caught up with Fei Ji's pace.

Unlike before, Fei Ji was now surrounded by dozens of officials, all flattering him with words of praise.

With all the compliments, Fei Ji raised his hand in acknowledgment.

He knew very well that these officials were just opportunists, quick to change sides depending on the winds. But he couldn't afford to offend them, and now that they had come to his side, he planned to use them to his advantage.

After dismissing the flattering officials, Fei Ji turned to look at Luo Quan, who appeared displeased, and said with a smile, "What's wrong? Are you upset that Prince Qi has taken Shanhai Pass?"

"Hmph, you know I can't stand those opportunistic officials. I'm happy that Prince Qi took Shanhai Pass. Honestly, I didn't expect it to happen so soon," Luo Quan said with a sigh.

Fei Ji pondered for a moment. “It’s probably because of those powerful new weapons. Now, with Prince Qi in the capital, he’ll surely be in business with His Majesty.”

Luo Quan suddenly laughed, “Of course! But a single firearms camp has already cost the court over a hundred thousand taels. Imagine how much they’ll sell those fire guns for!”

Fei Ji shook his head. “One thing’s for sure—Prince Qi is not a man to lose.”

Luo Quan sighed. “Yes, now Prince Qi truly has the leverage to strike a deal with His Majesty. With Shanhai Pass in his hands, the northern borders will be secure. Even the issue of relocating the capital can be delayed now.”

“Indeed, with Prince Qi’s forces stationed at Shanhai Pass, the barbarians won’t dare to threaten the Great Yu Empire again. With Shanhai Pass under his control, His Majesty can rest easy. This time, the court is about to get lively,” Fei Ji said with a laugh.

Luo Quan rolled his eyes. “But I think you’re one of the happiest, aren’t you? Prince Qi’s victory at Shanhai Pass has brought more glory to your family than any marriage proposal. It’s a shame that Luo Xin isn’t a girl. Otherwise, I would’ve humbled myself and sought a marriage alliance with Prince Qi’s family.”

“Heh, go back home and keep dreaming,” Fei Ji laughed heartily.

At this time, the messenger had already delivered the news to the palace.

The palace eunuch hurriedly took the message and delivered it to Xiao Wenxuan's bedroom.

"The Qingzhou Army has captured Shanhai Pass and stationed heavy troops there, threatening the barbarian heartland!"

When these words reached Xiao Wenxuan's eyes, his hands couldn't stop shaking. It had been twelve years—twelve years since they lost Shanhai Pass.

Since his ascension, this disgrace had remained in his heart, like a thorn that had never been removed.

It was because of the loss of Shanhai Pass, the most important defense against the barbarians, that he had been so conciliatory toward them.

For twelve years, he had lived in fear and shame, but the weakening of the Great Yu Empire left him powerless.

Now, Shanhai Pass had been recaptured by Xiao Ming.

Holding the memorial written by Xiao Ming, Xiao Wenxuan slapped his face hard. It hurt—this wasn't a dream!

“Shanhai Pass is back, Shanhai Pass is back! Ming’er, you are the greatest hero of the Great Yu Empire! Hahaha...”

Xiao Wenxuan couldn’t help but burst into laughter.

At this moment, he felt light as a feather. The Sixteen Prefectures were back, Shanhai Pass was back, and the barbarians had been driven out. He could finally sleep peacefully.

“Your Majesty, it’s time for the morning court,” the eunuch reminded him.

Xiao Wenxuan nodded, straightened his back, and at that moment, he felt more authoritative than ever.

Who said the imperial family was weak? Now, he was ready to tell the world that his reign was as solid as a mountain!