IRON DYNASTY

Chapter 5: The Spark of Technology

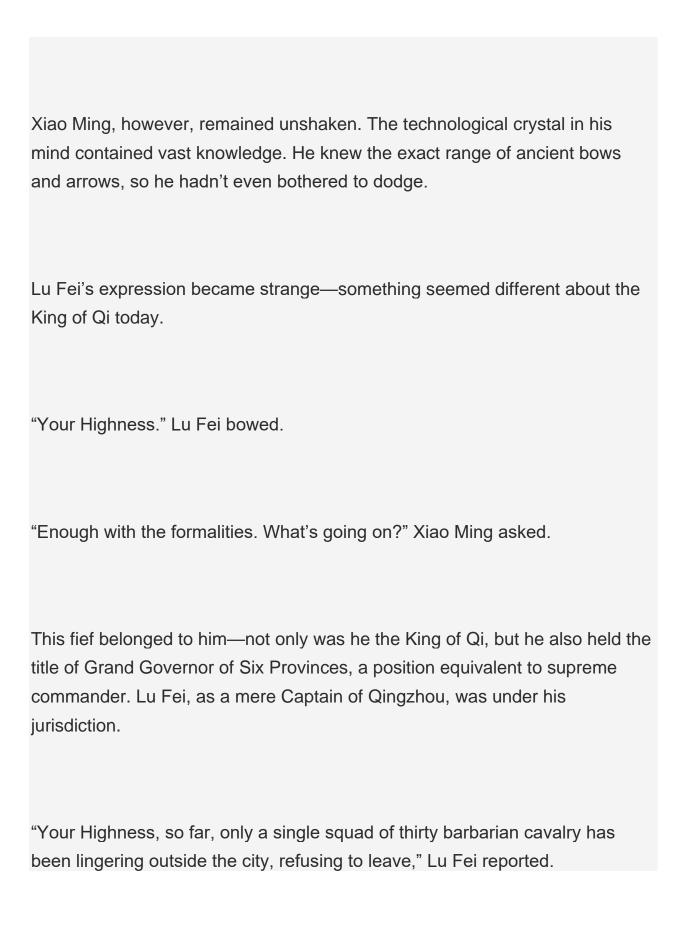
Northern City of Qingzhou

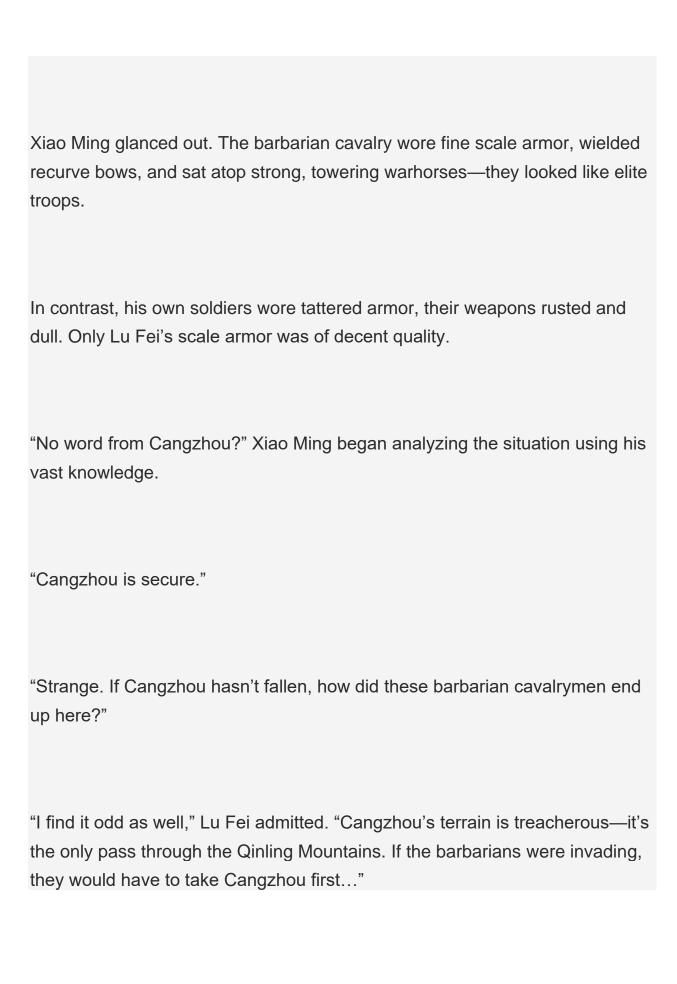
Below the city walls, a group of over thirty barbarian cavalrymen pointed at the city gate, laughing mockingly.

To the steppe barbarians, the soldiers of the Central Plains were weak and cowardly, afraid to leave the safety of their city when faced with them.

On the city walls, three hundred soldiers stood at the ready. Twenty archers had their longbows fully drawn, prepared to shoot at the barbarian riders lingering outside the city.

"Captain Lu, the King of Qi has arrived."
At the center of the city gate, a tall, seven-foot, black-faced man clad in scale armor was watching the barbarians warily.
This was Lu Fei, the Captain of Qingzhou, responsible for leading the troops.
"The King of Qi?" Lu Fei's voice boomed like thunder. "What's he doing here? He's just going to cause trouble."
Turning around, he spotted Xiao Ming ascending the city tower.
The barbarian cavalry outside noticed Xiao Ming's luxurious attire and immediately caused a stir—this was clearly an important figure.
One of the barbarians pulled his reins, drew his bow, and loosed an arrow at Xiao Ming.
With a sharp whoosh, the arrow landed harmlessly on the city wall. The distance was too great; the shot lacked the range to be a real threat. It was merely meant to intimidate.





As he spoke, he found it peculiar—normally, the King of Qi never concerned himself with military matters, yet with just a few words, he had identified the key issue.

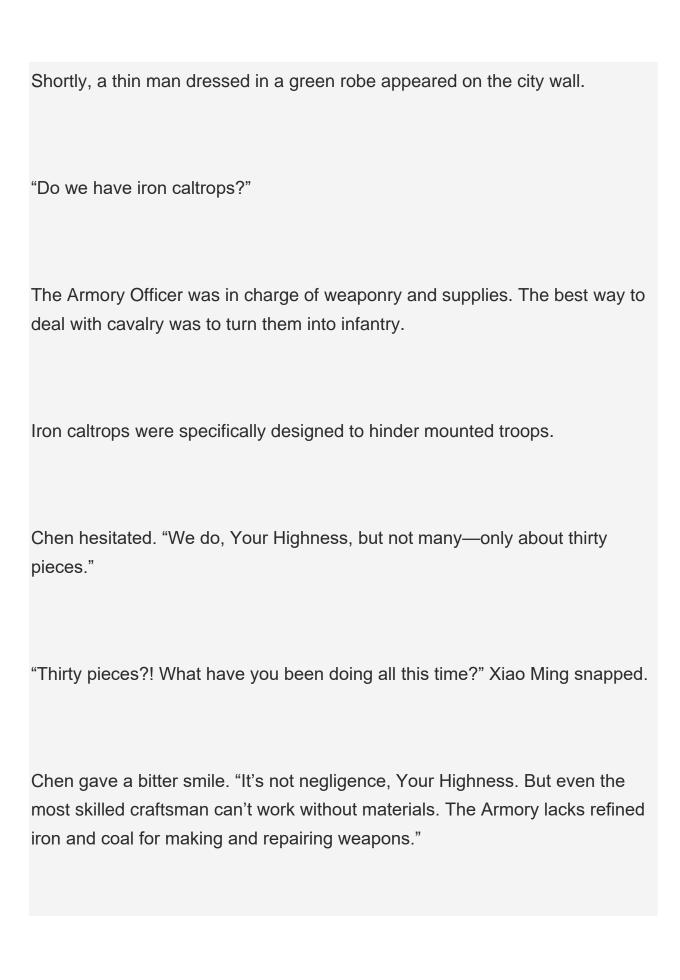
Xiao Ming had noticed Lu Fei's dismissive attitude toward him the moment he stepped onto the city wall. It irritated him.

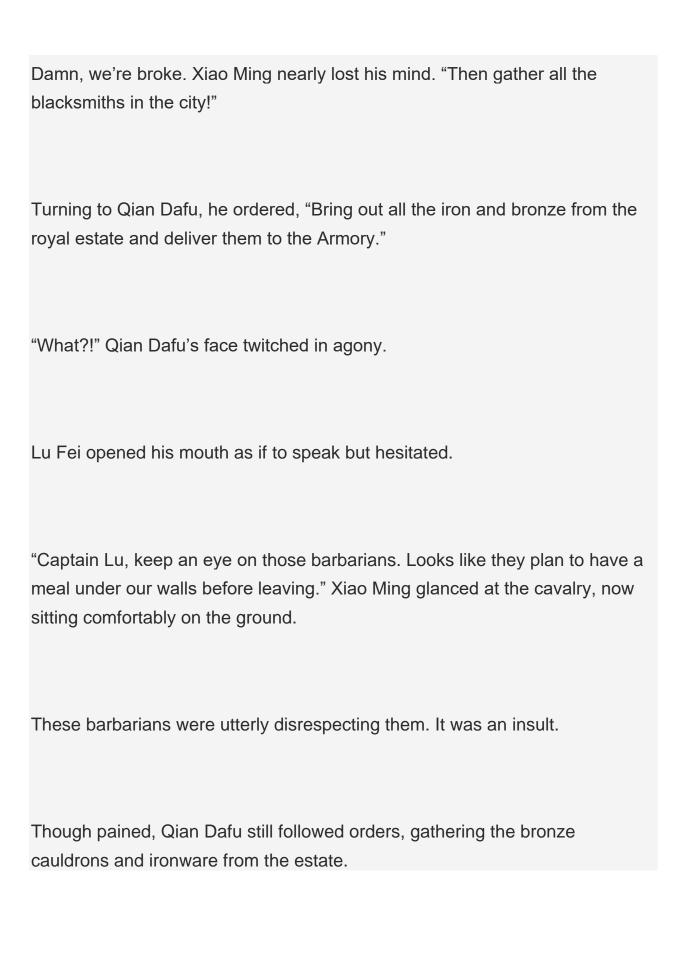
In this entire fief, only Qian Dafu treated him like a prince. Everyone else barely acknowledged him.

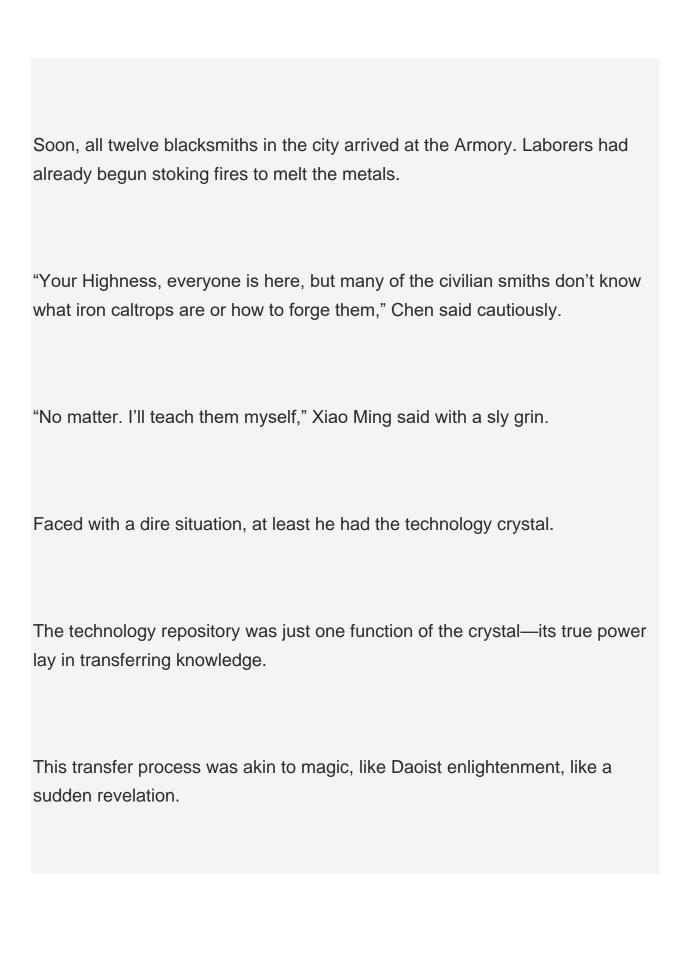
Deliberately, he said, "If that's the case, Captain Lu, why don't you lead the soldiers out to capture them and get some answers?"

Lu Fei's face turned green. He was impulsive, but not brainless. "Your Highness, we only have about thirty cavalry in total. While our numbers match, we are no match for the barbarians in mounted archery. Leaving the city would be suicide."

"Are you afraid, Captain Lu? If we don't capture them, how will we find out how they got here?" Xiao Ming said casually.
Lu Fei's face turned from green to red. "It's not that I don't dare, Your Highness—it would simply be a futile effort…"
Xiao Ming had made his point. He had only wanted to put Lu Fei in his place. "Oh? Perhaps not."
"Your Highness, this is no game," Lu Fei protested, thinking the King of Qi had gone mad.
The barbarians below seemed in no hurry to leave. Seeing them dismount and sit leisurely by their horses, Xiao Ming said, "Summon Armory Officer Chen."
Lu Fei dared not disobey—otherwise, this erratic prince might actually force him to attack. That would be a death sentence.







Simply put, the technology crystal embedded in his consciousness could link to other people's minds, subtly imparting knowledge to them.
At this moment, Xiao Ming was like a central computer. His consciousness was a data cable, transferring knowledge into other "computers"—people.
But what to transfer, how much to transfer—that was entirely under his control.
Chen was astonished as he watched Xiao Ming pull seven blacksmiths aside for a brief talk. When they returned, they immediately started forging.
To his shock, the iron caltrops they made were even more precise and sharper than those crafted by the Armory's professional smiths.
"Is this really the same King of Qi?"
In Chen's eyes, the King of Qi had always been a joke. But something was different now.

Xiao Ming smirked, pleased with himself. He had succeeded. By disguising the knowledge transfer as mere verbal instruction, the craftsmen believed they had simply learned to forge caltrops through their own understanding.

Not that caltrops were particularly complex—they had existed since the Warring States period. They were simply spiked iron contraptions shaped like small tetrahedrons.