

Running Dogs by John Wexley

M/M BS, R&D, SmS, QS, Kn

Running Dogs by John Wexley

Lieutenant: Who are you? What do you want? Speak up, I haven't all night to waste with you.

Peasant: I am the peasant, Tai Han, from the north of the village here. Today while I was in the fields, the soldiers of one of your companies came to my home and...and...there must have been some grave error, your Excellency...some grave error indeed...

L: What are you stammering? Hurry up! Don't speak in riddles!

P: Forgive me. I am not myself, I am so distraught. But they came and took from me all my grain and rice for the winter. They beat my wife. I heard her scream but when I ran to my house, I saw them carrying away the baskets with grain. I ran after them and begged them...

L: Well. Well?

P: Possibly...forgive me...perhaps I have not made myself clear...but they took all my rice and grain.

L: We need grain. Our army requires food. Our soldiers cannot protect you from the bandits without being fed.

P: Of course. To be sure, but I...I must be paid for it. It is all I have for the long winter. There are seven of us and we are expecting another one soon.

L: See here! Didn't the sergeant pay you?

P; Why no! He didn't pay me. He beat me instead and left me lying in the fields.

L: Which sergeant do you mean?

P: I do not know his name. but he is a thin man with a cast in one eye.

L: Sergeant Po Yat, you mean, in charge of Company B. He reported to me that he paid for all of today's grain. You must be mistaken.

P: No, he is mistaken. We will all starve if I am not paid or returned my rice and grain.

L: You are a liar and a thief! You want to be paid twice. Get out of here, or I'll...

P: No, no. It is the truth!

L: Then go to Sergeant Po Yat. Don't annoy me.

P: I cannot go to him again. He will beat me to death!

L: I will too, in a minute. Now get out of here!

P: I have heard that the landlord here, Wan Fu, gets paid liberally for his grain. Only we, the peasants, are robbed.

L: What's that?

P: Yes, we are robbed and beaten. And then we are insulted and accused of being thieves ourselves. It is true! All is true!

L: Silence!

P: I will not keep silent. I cannot keep silent! You are thieves! Murderers! Rapists! Yesterday one of your men raped my brother's child. Today she is dead – a corpse! Tomorrow we shall all be corpses!