

Mythical 35

Chapter 35: We Need to Recruit Talents

Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun were being treated like heroes. The allied lords and generals constantly offered them seats, drinks, and large chunks of meat. Even the seemingly delicate Zhao Yun accepted everything without hesitation. Zhang Fei, wrapped in bandages, was guzzling wine, sometimes spilling it onto his wounds without even flinching. He also stuffed his mouth with meat, gnawing it down to the bone, and gulped wine with hearty laughs.

The three were eating like gluttons. Chen Xi rolled his eyes at their voracious appetite and hearty manners.

"General Liu, your subordinates are indeed heroes!" Kong Rong, normally a great scholar, was also becoming somewhat uninhibited in the aftermath of their great victory. After all, in these martial times, no achievement could match military success.

"Brother Kong, you jest. I tread the path of a warrior, and I still rely on you for civil matters." Liu Bei, holding his wine bowl, looked genuinely happy. He downed the bowl in one go, with no pretense, and invited Kong Rong to sit.

"Not at all, not at all!" Kong Rong stroked his beard with a smile and turned to the burly general behind him. "An Guo, go thank Generals Guan, Zhang, and Zhao."

Kong Rong then turned back to Liu Bei. "General Liu, this man is one of my subordinates. He pledged his life to repay me for a single meal. Over the years, I feel I have owed him greatly. Today, I must thank you for saving his life."

"A loyal and righteous man, it was my duty to save him. Brother Kong, there's no need for such formality," Liu Bei said with genuine appreciation. "A man of loyalty and righteousness will always have Heaven's protection."

Chen Xi couldn't help but shrink back a little. Was Liu Bei starting to sound a bit like a preacher?

Inside the tent, the clinking of cups and cheers filled the air. In the wake of their great victory, everyone seemed to forget their previous worries, acting as if Luoyang was already within their grasp and the campaign to save the emperor was a success. Even Yuan Shao, who had been furious with Dong Zhuo over his uncle's death a few days ago, was now basking in the praises and toasts of others.

【Indeed, seeing this confirms that Yuan Shao is unreliable,】 thought Chen Xi, watching Yuan Shao revel in his fantasies of great achievements. He turned his attention elsewhere.

Sure enough, Cao Cao was not at all intoxicated by the victory. He was already engaging Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun in conversation, while the Xiahou brothers drank and chatted with them merrily.

Sun Jian, like Chen Xi, wore a neutral expression, silently observing the other lords' behaviors. He seemed to be considering whether it might be better to strike out on his own rather than follow Yuan Shao, whose current actions were a cold splash of water on his previous fervor.

Liu Bei, aside from exchanging words with Kong Rong and Tao Qian, was also subtly observing the other lords. But his gaze lingered the longest on where Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun were drinking.

Chen Xi wasn't even sure how he made it back to Liu Bei's camp. Reflecting on the situation, he guessed that nine out of ten people in the main camp were carried back. He shuddered at the thought of Lu Bu launching another surprise attack that night, imagining the allied forces in chaos with their generals drunk and incapacitated, save for Cao Cao, Sun Jian, and Liu Bei.

With this thought, Chen Xi broke out in a cold sweat. 【Yuan Shao, if you want to die, don't drag me down with you,】 he thought, realizing, 【Drinking too much can cause serious trouble. I must remember never to get too drunk in the camp. As long as I stay sober, I'll be able to handle any situation. If I were to die in the midst of chaos...】 His face darkened at the thought.

"Zi Chuan, are you awake?" Liu Bei's voice came from outside as Chen Lan finished helping Chen Xi wash up.

"General Liu, I apologize for my drunken behavior last night. Did I cause any offense?" Wearing a stylish white silk robe, Chen Xi looked tired but polite.

"Even when drunk, you insisted on reinforcing the camp defenses," Liu Bei said with a smile.

Hearing this, Chen Xi let out a long breath. 【It's good to be cautious; even drunk, I remembered that Li Ru and Jia Xu were very dangerous.】

"That's a relief. General Liu, please ensure that Generals Guan, Zhang, and Zhao take turns patrolling to prevent any mishaps. If Lu Bu launches another surprise attack, there are very few who could raise the alarm in time," Chen Xi said with a wry smile.

"There's no need to worry about Lu Bu anymore," Liu Bei reassured him. "Zi Long said last night that Lu Bu's invincible mindset has been shattered. It will be difficult for him to recover in the short term. In fact, if he doesn't overcome the shadow of this defeat, he might even regress. Of course, Zi Long also mentioned that Lu Bu might advance further." Liu Bei's explanation started off reassuring but ended with a statement that left Chen Xi terrified.

Lu Bu was already incredibly strong. It had taken all their effort and a coordinated assault to barely bring him down. If he became even stronger, how could anyone survive?

"Let's hope Lu Bu regresses. Even if he only returns to his previous strength, that's bad enough. He's too powerful," Chen Xi sighed. "I think we need to recruit some top-tier generals to form an elite team. Every time Lu Bu shows up, we need to have a new set of people to beat him down!"

Liu Bei didn't understand every word Chen Xi used, but he got the gist of it. Recruiting talents was indeed crucial, especially after witnessing Lu Bu easily defeat Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. Liu Bei's determination to recruit talents intensified, though he knew it wasn't the right time yet.

After learning about Lu Bu's current state, Dong Zhuo's face was filled with disappointment and discontent. He had valued Lu Bu for his reputation as an undefeated warrior, but now that Lu Bu had been defeated, Dong Zhuo's esteem for him plummeted. If Lu Bu could lose once, he could lose again.

Thinking about the three men who had challenged Lu Bu, Dong Zhuo felt that Hulao Pass, supposedly an impregnable fortress, was not safe at all. He began to doubt the value of his territories, which only seemed to bring him trouble.

As these thoughts swirled in his mind, Dong Zhuo suddenly had an idea: why not move everything from Luoyang back to his hometown? His homeland was fortified like a steel trap, with the natural barriers of

the Hangu Pass and the strength of Western Qin. It was a perfect place to live without fear of invasion. In his hometown, he could do as he pleased because everything would be under his control.

Acting on this impulse, Dong Zhuo hurried to find Li Ru. "Wen You, if we empty Luoyang and move to Chang'an, taking advantage of the natural defenses of the Hangu Pass, will I be able to live even better than now?"

Li Ru was taken aback, looking at the towering figure of Dong Zhuo standing before him with hopeful eyes. All his anger dissipated.