

Mythical 37

Chapter 37: The Entire Fantasy Camp

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Every day, the allied forces and Dong Zhuo's army engage in routine skirmishes. The allied forces cannot break through, and Dong Zhuo's army has no intention of fighting back. Thus, they are stuck in a stalemate. It seems Yuan Shao has completely forgotten his vow to be irreconcilable with Dong Zhuo. Now that he has gained enough fame, taking Hulao Pass and threatening Luoyang would truly make him renowned throughout the land.

Chen Xi looked at the bloodstained Hulao Pass. Siege warfare is brutal, with casualties every day.

"Zichuan, how long do you think it will take for us to reach Luoyang at this rate?" Zhang Fei asked gloomily. He had recovered ninety percent from his last severe injury. According to Zhang Fei, as well as Guan Yu and Zhao Yun's observations, his strength had even increased significantly.

"Not long. Dong Zhuo, who sits atop the city wall, hasn't been seen for several days. It seems the Dong Zhuo army is preparing to abandon the pass and flee," Chen Xi said calmly. "By the way, third brother, what do you think of Lu Bu?"

"Lu Bu?" Zhang Fei's face showed some disgust, but then he scratched his head. "Honestly, he's a top-notch warrior, but I don't like his character. Why do you ask, Zichuan?"

"I plan to create a team of all-star generals, with basic requirements at your level," Chen Xi said expressionlessly.

"Huh? That sounds difficult. Your third brother here is a top-notch warrior himself, counting heads on his fingers!" Zhang Fei lifted his head with a look of loneliness befitting a master.

"Almost got killed by Lu Bu..." Chen Xi rolled his eyes.

"Zichuan, setting aside Lu Bu's character, his sheer strength alone makes him difficult to recruit," Zhao Yun silently appeared behind Chen Xi and spoke.

"So you don't mind us trying to recruit him?" Chen Xi turned his head and saw not only Zhao Yun but also Guan Yu and Liu Bei.

"Lu Bu is indeed a hero. If Zichuan wants to try recruiting him, it is worth a shot," Liu Bei said affirmatively. To him, if it didn't have any major adverse effects, he didn't mind letting Chen Xi waste a little time.

On the other side, following Dong Zhuo's orders, Li Ru was reviewing documents. Once this batch was completed, he estimated that the tung oil arrangements would be in place. Then, it would be time to take all the treasures and money, leak the information to lure in the coalition forces, and set a fire to burn them to death.

"Hmm?" Li Ru looked at a particular memorial, thought for a moment, then took a blank imperial edict and filled it out with some content, stamping it with the imperial seal. He tossed the memorial aside and continued reviewing others. Currently, Li Ru truly held great power.

Under the lamp, the memorial clearly stated that Beihai Governor Kong Rong and Xuzhou Governor Tao Qian jointly recommended Liu Xuande, a relative of the Han imperial family and current governor of Pingyuan, to be the governor of Taishan, followed by a lengthy list of commendations.

With the intelligence network at his disposal, Li Ru knew that Guan, Zhang, and Zhao were all Liu Bei's subordinates. Naturally, he was interested in recruiting these powerful generals. Now that the Chancellor had delegated significant authority to him, he was diligently considering the Chancellor's interests. Though this plan might not be immediately useful, it could be advantageous in a few years when the time is ripe to march troops from Hangu Pass. Liu Bei was a pawn he valued.

"Who are you?" Lu Bu asked, seeing an old man sipping wine in his home.

"I'm just a messenger. Someone asked me to deliver a letter to you, thanking General Lu for your actions in Bingzhou." The old man stood up, pulled a letter from his robe, and handed it to Lu Bu.

Lu Bu's face remained expressionless, but the struggle in his eyes was evident. He took a deep breath, accepted the letter, and told a servant, "Give him some money and see him out of Luoyang."

"Thank you." The old man bowed and quickly left.

Lu Bu opened the letter, skimmed through it quickly, then closed it in shock. His astonishment was visible as he crushed the letter into powder. Turning to another servant, he said, "Summon Wen Yuan for a meeting!"

The next day, Li Ru ordered Lu Bu to excavate the imperial tombs in Luoyang and collect the treasures. Lu Bu, claiming his injuries were not healed, refused.

Li Ru frowned slightly at this but did not press Lu Bu further. Instead, he assigned the task to Li Que, who saw it as a lucrative opportunity.

"Li Wenyu, how dare you treat me like this!" Lu Bu roared in anger in his room. He recalled the letter's warning that if he excavated the imperial tombs, he would be branded a traitor forever, never to be accepted by the Han dynasty. Reflecting on Li Ru's plan to burn Luoyang, even Lu Bu felt a chill. How many people would be displaced? He couldn't imagine. Fighting the Hu people in Bingzhou was to protect peace. This fire would doom the million residents of Luoyang.

"General!" Zhang Liao called loudly from the door.

"Wen Yuan, what did you find out?" Lu Bu asked gloomily.

"Luoyang is filled with tung oil. If I hadn't investigated, we might still be in the dark," Zhang Liao said angrily. "What is Li Ru planning?"

"He plans to burn Luoyang and move the capital to Chang'an," Lu Bu said calmly.

"What?" Zhang Liao shouted. Everything suddenly made sense to him. "Fengxian, what do we do?"

"There's nothing we can do. Any extreme actions from us could lead to the annihilation of our Bingzhou soldiers in Luoyang. Xu Rong has already been recalled," Lu Bu said darkly. "We can only proceed cautiously. I just refused the tomb excavation task, and Li Ru still suspects us."

"Fengxian, let's return to Bingzhou after this. The men are waiting for us. There, we won't deal with these ridiculous politics. We fight the Hu, they fight their emperor," Zhang Liao said hopefully.

Lu Bu remained silent. Bingzhou... he wanted to go back, but he dared not.

Since Ding Yuan took him, unwillingly, to Luoyang to support the emperor, since Ding Yuan led most of Bingzhou's soldiers away from their homeland, since the lack of soldiers led to the Hu people in the northern frontier raiding south, he couldn't muster the courage to return.

"Fengxian!" Zhang Liao interrupted Lu Bu's thoughts.

"We can't go back," Lu Bu said coldly. "Prepare for the upcoming battle. Protecting our Bingzhou soldiers is more important than any uncertain plans!"