

Mythical 38

Chapter 38: Luoyang in Flames

Hulao Pass was captured. Any discerning person could see that Dong Zhuo abandoned it, but Yuan Shao claimed the victory as his own! Regardless of why Dong Zhuo gave up the pass, Yuan Shao now occupies it, and that's all that matters to him.

Seeing the success of the campaign to aid the emperor and the imminent achievement of unparalleled glory, Yuan Shao decisively ordered a full assault on Luoyang to complete this grand undertaking.

The allied forces moved quickly. With the support of money and coercion, their march was astonishingly fast.

Liu Bei listened to Chen Xi's plan and slowly trailed at the rear of the allied forces. Cao Cao did the same, hanging back as well. The smart ones knew Luoyang would be dangerous, but many were blinded by the dazzling prospects ahead and couldn't see the corpses lying in their path.

Luoyang erupted in flames. The screams and cries could be heard miles away. Chen Xi gazed sorrowfully in the direction of Luoyang, estimating that most of the vanguard had probably already perished in the blaze.

"This way, De Mou!" Sun Jian shouted to Cheng Pu. They had just entered Luoyang and had yet to loot when someone yelled about a fire. Sun Jian immediately sensed danger. Soon, flames engulfed the entire city, and smoke swirled around. Even a fool could tell they had been tricked, and retreat was no longer an option.

"Gongfu, Yigong, follow me!" Cheng Pu brandished his iron halberd, the powerful aura suppressing the surrounding flames. However, he soon felt dizzy as the fire consumed oxygen rapidly. Warriors like them needed more oxygen than ordinary people and felt the effects sooner.

Huang Gai and Han Dang did not hesitate and followed Cheng Pu along the path cleared of flames.

"Put out the fire, quickly!" Yuan Shao frantically commanded his men. He had never imagined Dong Zhuo would be so insane as to burn the imperial capital!

Tens of thousands of soldiers worked together, finally managing to control part of the fire. However, most of Luoyang was already reduced to ruins. Chen Xi, looking at the smoke and debris, felt the harshness of this era for the first time.

"Sigh~" Chen Xi sighed deeply. He had tried to summon rain from the sky, but there wasn't even a hint of moisture. He could only watch as Luoyang turned into ruins. It wasn't that he didn't want to help, but he lacked the ability. The allied forces had the capacity, but they weren't his to command.

"Zichuan, do you understand how I feel now?" Liu Bei, upon entering Luoyang, was filled with grief and rage. "This is the imperial capital! This is the capital of our great Han Dynasty! How dare Dong Zhuo do this!" Liu Bei's hoarse roar echoed in Chen Xi's ears.

"Yes, this is the imperial capital Luoyang. We didn't have the strength to save it. Even if we had known in advance, it wouldn't have mattered. The allied forces had the ability, but it wasn't ours. Lord Xuande, if you wish to unify the realm, do not rely on others. Only by holding power in your own hands can you prevent such tragedies," Chen Xi said softly.

"Let's return to Taishan Commandery. I am disgusted by their inaction. No matter how difficult, I will save the Han Dynasty!" Liu Bei said solemnly, gripping Chen Xi's hand.

Normally, at this moment, Chen Xi should bow his head in allegiance. Instead, he stared at his hand being held by Liu Bei, feeling disgusted. Two grown men holding hands in public, especially when one of them was himself...

Chen Xi calmly withdrew his hand and bowed to Liu Bei. "Lord Xuande, please wait a few more days!"

Meanwhile, Sun Jian had pulled a female corpse out of a well, finding a brocade pouch with a box inside. Opening it, he saw the Imperial Seal. His heart nearly stopped when he realized it was genuine. The Imperial Seal was four inches square, with five intertwined dragons carved on top; one corner was missing, replaced with gold, and inscribed with eight characters: "Received the Mandate of Heaven, May (the emperor) Live Long and Prosper."

Sun Jian was so shocked he didn't know where to place his hands. His body trembled with excitement.

Cheng Pu, seeing the item in Sun Jian's hand, was initially surprised but then overjoyed. "Surviving such a disaster brings great fortune, my lord! With the heavens bestowing the Imperial Seal upon you, you will surely ascend the throne one day. Quickly hide this treasure, and let us return to Jiangdong to plan our grand enterprise!"

Cheng Pu's eyes gleamed with malice as he glanced at the soldiers behind them.

"These are all my trusted men; they won't spread this news. Let's return to Jiangdong and plot our grand plans!" Sun Jian looked at the six or seven soldiers behind him, all his personal guards, and rejected Cheng Pu's proposal.

"Alright," Cheng Pu thought for a moment, sighed, and abandoned his idea, though he kept a close watch on the men.

On the other side, Liu Bei, Chen Xi, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun went to pay respects at the imperial tombs, now in ruins. To those loyal to the Han Dynasty, these tombs still held the spirits of the ancestors.

Chen Xi calmly lit incense and offered prayers, then led Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun to another location.

"It's up to you. Save as many as you can," Chen Xi said, pointing to Cai Yong's house, engulfed in flames.

Chen Xi had already explained on the way that Cai Yong's house held four thousand volumes of books. Their task was to rescue as many as possible, without worrying about rare editions—just grab whatever was close!

Chen Xi had completely misjudged the situation. The surrounding flames were no match for the trio's abilities. What he had imagined as a firefighting operation turned out to be a joke compared to their methods. They simply suppressed the flames directly. The technique was simple: a slap here, a slap there, a slap to the left, a slap to the right, and finally an upward slap. No more air...

"Hey, hey, hey, Second Brother, what are you doing?" Chen Xi watched Guan Yu stash another book into his robe, having already taken one.

"It's just the Guliang Commentary. What's the big deal?" Guan Yu replied calmly, showing no intention of giving it back. He then casually tucked a handwritten copy of the Zuo Commentary by Cai Yong into his robe.

"You're collecting the Spring and Autumn Annals!" Chen Xi grumbled, organizing the scrolls. Not many were burnt, as the fire started after the allied forces entered the city. About ninety percent of the four thousand volumes were intact, though many were singed.

Guan Yu glanced at Chen Xi, pulled out a book annotated by Cai Yong, and started reading on the spot. He had a keen interest in the Spring and Autumn Annals. With this knowledge, he could debate with great scholars. The reason was simple: his family had only one book. Anyone who spends over an hour a day, studying the same book without interruption for twenty years, would astonish others when discussing it.