

Mythical 46

Chapter 46: Sun Jian is Doomed and Resources

Sun Jian left, and nearly everyone knew he had the Imperial Seal. Many began to target Sun Jian, including Yuan Shao.

"Sigh, what a pity. Sun Jian will die under a hail of arrows. Such a waste of a figure," Chen Xi said with a hint of melancholy after returning to Liu Bei's camp from the main tent.

"Zichuan, what are you talking about?" Liu Bei asked, puzzled. Why was Chen Xi so certain that Sun Jian would die, and specifically under a hail of arrows? Liu Bei, despite his anger and desire to deal with Sun Jian, acknowledged that the Jiangdong Tiger was not easy to handle. How could he just say he would die?

"Heh, Sun Jian is doomed. It's his own fault for speaking rashly and coveting the Imperial Seal. If he wants to return to Jiangdong, he has to pass through Liu Jingzhou's territory, which is guarded by a Han loyalist with ten thousand soldiers. Carrying the Imperial Seal through there? If Liu Biao finds out, he will definitely intercept him," Chen Xi said with a cold smile.

While others might not understand Liu Biao's thinking, Chen Xi had some insight. Sun Jian would die exactly as he swore he would. Liu Biao, as a loyal Han clan member, would not leave his territory but would ensure that Sun Jian died according to his oath to uphold the dignity of the Han Dynasty. If Sun Jian swore he would die under a hail of arrows if he took the Seal, then Liu Biao would make it so.

"That's true, but the Jiangdong Tiger is not so easily killed. With his soldiers and generals, even if Liu Jingzhou intercepts, it might not be easy to take him down," Liu Bei shook his head, doubting Chen Xi's certainty. He believed Sun Jian might suffer losses but not be killed, given his stature as a general.

"If Liu Jingzhou knows, he will be prepared. As for Sun Jian's bravery, it pales compared to someone like Lu Bu, especially if the attack is a surprise. I don't think Sun Jian has any chance of survival. Even if it were Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun instead of Cheng Pu, Huang Gai, and Han Dang, they wouldn't fare much better," Chen Xi shrugged. "Basically, Sun Jian is as good as dead. We just need to wait for the news."

"Even if Liu Biao has a general like Lu Bu, they wouldn't stoop to such tactics. Think of Lu Bu's character—he maintains a warrior's pride despite everything," Liu Bei shook his head.

"Hahaha, we'll see soon enough. Let's hurry back to Taishan and leave this place of strife," Chen Xi laughed but did not argue further. Sun Jian was doomed, regardless of how he fled. Liu Biao would never allow anyone to take the Seal. This was why Liu Biao later opposed Yuan Shu even when he couldn't send troops.

Being a member of the Han royal family meant being the best candidate for the throne if the emperor fell. Those vying for the Seal were essentially encroaching on their assets. Hence, they had strong reasons to fight other lords and were often the first to be pushed out by other warlords.

Liu Bei left with a good reason—to assume his duties in Taishan. Liu Bei hadn't done anything to offend the coalition and had often mediated disputes with Kong Rong. Therefore, when he left, Kong Rong and Tao Qian saw him off, and the other lords who couldn't attend ensured he had enough provisions for a round trip to Taishan.

"Big brother, I've never seen us with so many supplies! The coalition is quite generous to us!" Zhang Fei exclaimed, excitedly running around the supply convoy before running to Liu Bei.

"Indeed, we usually have just enough supplies. This time we have enough for two months for twenty thousand men. If we are frugal, it could last us half a year, especially if they are infantry," Liu Bei said cheerfully, clearly pleased.

"Although cavalry eat more, having cavalry is still better," Guan Yu added.

"Whether the coalition is good or not, I don't know. But these supplies are far from enough. Three months' worth is decent, but in Taishan, we'll need to borrow food for the first year at least," Chen Xi said helplessly. "With fifty thousand refugees and Taishan bandits, we need to suppress the bandits while managing the region. Suppressing bandits isn't an issue; any of you can handle it. But governing..."

Chen Xi looked helplessly at Liu Bei. "Xuande, do you know how to quickly raise funds?"

Liu Bei smiled bitterly, avoiding the topic. Ever since Chen Xi started emphasizing Taishan's dire need for funds, Liu Bei had been troubled. He realized everything needed money. Governing Taishan would cost a fortune.

"This is indeed troublesome. Xuande, do you have any merchant friends?" Chen Xi asked bluntly. This question was a bit rude since commerce was considered a lowly occupation despite its wealth, with low social status.

"Before defeating the Yellow Turbans in Youzhou, we were helped by Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping, who provided us with horses and weapons. They are horse merchants from Zhongshan. If you need, I can write to them for assistance," Liu Bei said without shame. He came from a humble background and didn't disdain commerce. Writing to Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping was a favor to them now, given his current status.

"Since they helped you, it's fitting to ask for their help. But I'm concerned they might not be able to handle it. Write down what I say and send it to them. They'll bring the people and materials we need," Chen Xi said with a smile. Since time was short, they needed to act quickly, ideally securing funds and resources by the time they reached Taishan.

"Zichuan, can we really produce salt this way?" Liu Bei asked in surprise. As an essential good, the profits from salt were enormous.

"Just drying it. I think you use lotus seeds to check saturation. Wait, I forgot. They can figure it out themselves. Write down seven pits, each ten centimeters deep. Alright, make it three inches. They'll adjust as needed," Chen Xi said, frowning as he wrote.

"Then the refining process... I remember that. Write it down. This method works for both well salt and rock salt," Chen Xi mumbled.

"Done. Xuande, have someone send this. It's genuine, though there might be some errors. They can adjust," Chen Xi said, handing the document to Liu Bei. His mind was full of such money-making ideas, but they needed craftsmen to perfect them.