

Mythical 50

Chapter 50: The Aristocratic Family

Chen Xi smiled and didn't respond because he knew exactly what Fan Liang meant. He was also acutely aware of another point: the Chen family had now pinned all its hopes on Chen Qun. Even if they saw him, they would only regard him as a pawn, or worse, as an expendable.

Chen Qun's excellence could not be denied. After Xun Yu's death, it was this man who took over the internal affairs of Wei. He was one of the few politicians in the history of the Three Kingdoms who stood out. His implementation of the Nine-rank System essentially cemented the aristocratic families' control over the state, making him a banner figure for all aristocrats.

"Talented" isn't enough to describe his ability. He possessed exceptional natural talent, but unfortunately, Xun Yu's superior morality and ability overshadowed Chen Qun. This was a disaster for Chen Qun, an unparalleled disaster. Even though Xun Yu was a fellow townsman, they rarely met, and Chen Qun's knowledge of Xun Yu's abilities was secondhand information.

After Xun Yu joined Cao Cao's camp, Chen Qun, confident in his own talents, believed he could surpass Xun Yu in every way. With this belief, he kicked Liu Bei to the curb and joined Cao Cao, planning to outshine Xun Yu and make him step down willingly. Then, out of consideration for their shared hometown, he would make Xun Yu his deputy. After all, the Chen family was a renowned aristocratic family in Yingchuan, and helping a fellow townsman was the right thing to do.

With this mindset, Chen Qun left Liu Bei and joined Cao Cao's camp. But when he finally faced Xun Yu, he realized that in every aspect, from moral integrity to personal conduct, he was no match for Xun Yu. Worse still, his buddy and comrade, Sima Yi, seemed equally outmatched by Xun Yu's nephew, Xun You, plunging Chen Qun into a deep depression.

In other words, Chen Qun's downfall was due to his lack of careful observation. Learning from this lesson, his comrade Sima Yi became extremely cautious, always observing meticulously, which eventually led to the exhaustion and death of Zhuge Liang.

In summary, Chen Qun's life was a tragedy of epic proportions. If it weren't for Xun Yu's stubborn refusal to let Cao Cao assume the title of King of Wei, leading to Xun Yu's downfall when Cao Cao became obstinate, Chen Qun might never have had a chance to rise. Once Xun Yu fell, Chen Qun saw a glimmer of hope, and soon after, Xun You also died, giving Sima Yi the opportunity to come into his own.

But by then, Cao Cao had become increasingly irrational, self-assured to the point of arrogance. Chen Xi aimed to form a dream team, needing not only the best generals but also the best advisors. Was Chen Qun the best? Clearly not, as Xun Yu was still alive.

By the time Xun Yu passed away, Zhuge Liang would be in his prime. The dream team must always be composed of the best talents, and Chen Qun wasn't one of them. Unless absolutely necessary, Chen Xi wouldn't consider bringing him in as a substitute.

These were just Chen Xi's thoughts. Securing Xun Yu was uncertain, but Chen Qun was not bad. Unfortunately, he was a direct descendant of the Chen family, whereas Chen Xi was a collateral branch. Going to the Chen family now would only put him at a disadvantage.

Chen Xi sought allies, not masters. His memories of the Chen family were blurry, mostly filled with the aftermath of his father's death and the family's opportunistic seizure of his inheritance. Merchants, though essential, still held a low status. Even if their actions were for the family's benefit, they wouldn't receive acknowledgment when they fell.

Chen Xi held no grudges, only seeing the family's actions as opportunistic. The lack of ability to guard his inheritance was his shortcoming back then.

Although he was grateful for the education provided by the Chen family, Chen Xi harbored little affection for them. He anticipated a day when the Chen family would seek him out, and until then, he wouldn't approach them. He believed that day wasn't far off.

Three days later, in the Chen family's main residence, Chen Qun looked at the report from his housekeeper, slightly frowned, then smirked contemptuously and tossed the silk document on the table. "No need to report such trivial matters in the future. He hasn't come to pay respects to the main family since returning to Yingchuan. Does he really think he's found a worthy lord? He must have forgotten the Chen family's teachings. Since he won't acknowledge the main family, let him stop calling himself a member of the Yingchuan Chen family. Strike his name off and send it back to Chen Zichuan. Let him understand that the Chen family doesn't need him."

Chen Xi sat at home with his housekeeper beside him, while Chen Lan poured him wine. He was waiting.

Chen Xi waited for the Chen family's decision. The Chen family valued propriety, famed for the "Three Lords" who were known for their virtue and filial piety. Their family rules heavily emphasized such formalities. Chen Xi wanted to see how they would handle his three-day delay. Would they ignore it, impose a light familial punishment, or make him an example?

When the Chen family servant arrogantly announced that he had been expelled from the family, Chen Xi laughed. He hadn't expected to be made an example. It was likely Chen Qun's doing. The final thread connecting him to the Chen family had snapped, leaving him with no strong feelings. The Chen family never really belonged to him.

Chen Xi wasn't affected by the servant's disdain. Expulsion meant nothing to him; the Chen family ties were already insignificant. Upon hearing the news, the housekeeper turned pale and started crying loudly, repeatedly bowing to Chen Liang's memorial tablet.

"Rise, old man. It doesn't matter. A family is just a name. When we are strong enough, they'll come to us. With Chen Qun choosing Cao Mengde, the Chen family will decline. Eventually, we'll become the main family. It's just a joke," Chen Xi said, smiling at the despondent housekeeper and Chen Lan.

They didn't understand that in chaotic times, aristocratic families underwent blood-soaked transitions. Every inheritance saw some members forced to take the wrong side. The family's strategy was to send out capable children to various promising lords. Chen Xi had been pushed to Liu Bei's side, perhaps seen as a pawn by the Chen family patriarch. Only the surviving ones would be recognized as legitimate; the rest were mere servants. This was how aristocratic families refreshed their bloodlines in times of chaos. Being expelled didn't matter as long as he emerged victorious in the end.

Chen Xi didn't bother explaining. When the time came, he'd rebuild the family but wouldn't accept anyone from the Chen family. It's better to hold your destiny in your own hands.

Chen Xi was confident that Chen Qun would eventually fail. The reason was simple: after avoiding all obstacles, Liu Bei would unify the realm. Chen Qun would never join Liu Bei's camp. The reckoning would come later; for now, let him do as he pleased. There would come a day when the Chen family sought him out.