

Mythical 56

Chapter 56: The Wealthy Have Finally Arrived

In the morning, Chen Xi looked at the city walls before him, observing the few officials from Fenggao who had come out to greet them. He sighed deeply. This place was too poor. Not a single fat person could be seen anywhere, a testament to the thorough plundering by the bandits of Mount Tai. They didn't even understand the basic principle of raising sheep before shearing them. What good is there in robbing the poor?

Standing in the government office of Fenggao, a gust of wind blew, causing dust to fall from the beams. When they opened the official granary, it was so empty that even the mice had starved to death.

"Master Liu, Fenggao is indeed very poor," Chen Xi said helplessly, spreading his hands. "One could say it's a blank slate, but that's also good. As long as people can eat, they'll be willing to do anything."

"It is truly a blank slate. Are you ready to take over this mess, Chen Xi?" Liu Bei said with a wry smile. He had expected Mount Tai to be poor, but not to this extent. There wasn't a single well-dressed person in the entire city.

"These issues aren't too troublesome. Within three to five days, we should receive word. I had thought Zhang Shiping and Su Shuang would arrive before us, but they haven't. Still, we won't be short on money and grain. Master Liu, you should open the granaries to provide relief, tell the people that we will start repairing the city and its defenses in three days, and let them know they'll be paid for their work," Chen Xi said with a shrug, looking at the empty granary. He didn't have money, but many were willing to pay for technology.

"If that's the case, I'll implement it now," Liu Bei said, patting Chen Xi's shoulder. "Leave the rest to me."

In the following days, Chen Xi handled governmental affairs in a seemingly casual manner, but there were few mistakes because the overall direction was correct.

For Chen Xi, it was enough to tell the subordinates what to do, how many people were needed where, and how to manage things. The officials would then fill in the details and present a draft plan for Chen Xi to review. After a few adjustments, combining his long-term vision as a transmigrant with the era's practicalities, the strategic plan was complete.

Within a few days, the administrative framework of Fenggao was established, and all governmental affairs began to proceed in an orderly fashion. The impoverished population, half of whom were bandits, was reorganized by Liu Bei to start contributing to the city.

“Chen Xi, you seem to have nothing to do,” Jian Yong observed, sipping tea during a rare break and noticing Chen Xi dozing off.

“I’ve already solved the big issues. The rest isn’t my concern. I set the framework,” Chen Xi said, half-asleep. He didn’t bother maintaining his manners in front of Jian Yong, a good-natured fellow from Liu Bei’s hometown.

“Chen Xi, didn’t you say those capable should work harder? Even Zilong has been pulled into handling governmental affairs, yet you still have the energy to nap. You always seem tired during the day,” Jian Yong said, half-advising and half-joking.

“When tasks were distributed, you all seemed gleeful about it,” Chen Xi replied, opening his eyes and taking a sip of tea. “I’m not just dealing with the harvest, but also land reclamation, disaster relief, managing refugees, rebuilding city defenses, increasing tax revenue, conducting population surveys, boosting commerce, and much more.”

Chen Xi counted on his fingers, listing the tasks, making Jian Yong, who had just arrived in Mount Tai, feel even more frustrated. Initially, Chen Xi had volunteered to handle the broad strategy, and everyone had gladly let him take on the heavy lifting. Now it had come to this.

Chen Xi finished all his tasks in five or six days, then sat in the administration hall watching Jian Yong scurry around handling affairs. Zhao Yun, too, wasn’t spared; he was responsible for the details of the farming arrangements. Despite several tips from Chen Xi, Zhao Yun struggled, spending a lot of time making revisions to barely acceptable standards.

“Who would’ve thought you’d finish three months’ work in five days!” Jian Yong was clearly exasperated. He worked hard every day while watching his superior leisurely sip tea. How is that fair?

“You’re just too slow,” Chen Xi said listlessly. Being idle was also torturous, especially when he couldn’t leave the administration hall since someone always had questions about his directives. While each word was understandable, the combined meaning often eluded them.

"Chen Xi..." Jian Yong was so angry his beard twitched. Initially, he had come from Pingyuan to help Liu Bei, only to find a genius who made him feel completely inadequate.

"Report, Advisor Chen, Zhongshan's Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping request an audience," a messenger announced, bowing as he entered.

"Finally, they've arrived. Any later, and we'd run out of food. Looks like I can finish everything today," Chen Xi said, smiling. "Yuanjian, I'll go handle my business."

After Chen Xi left, Jian Yong finally felt at peace. Turning to Zhao Yun, who was still working on agricultural affairs, he asked, "Zilong, why have you been so silent today?"

"Advisor Chen is beyond our capabilities. Despite his young age, he's a natural talent. We handle these matters while he supervises, familiarizing ourselves with governmental affairs. Even without us, he could likely finish all the work within ten days," Zhao Yun sighed. The more he worked on agricultural affairs, the more he realized Chen Xi was refining him.

"Master Liu asked me to watch over him to prevent him from overworking, fearing he might exhaust himself. Now, I'm not worried at all. What might tire us out seems effortless for Chen Xi," Jian Yong said, shaking his head.

Chen Xi stepped outside, greeting Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping with a bow, a smile on his face. "You've finally arrived. Master Liu has been waiting for several days. He recently left to inspect the counties regarding the bandit issue. Would you be willing to wait here for a few days? Master Liu should return soon."

"Please, Advisor Chen, there's no need for such formalities. We wouldn't dare interrupt Master Liu's important work. Zhang and I have brought one hundred thousand stones of grain from Zhongshan to support Master Liu's great cause," Su Shuang said boldly. Their voices carried the authority of their wealth, not for nothing had they amassed such fortune, even if they didn't rank among the top four wealthiest merchants of the late Han dynasty.

"One hundred thousand stones of grain," Chen Xi acknowledged Su Shuang's courage, impressed. They were indeed wealthy merchants, even if they weren't among the top four. "Let's be frank. I'll accept the

one hundred thousand stones of grain. I wrote the formula, and you must have tested it; otherwise, you wouldn't have come back."

Chen Xi's words visibly relaxed Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping. They weren't afraid of demands, only of rejection. Negotiations would proceed once the goods were accepted. Their efforts and resources to gather the grain quickly had not been in vain.