

Mythical 58

Chapter 58: Preparing for the Future

After Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping left, Chen Xi resumed his tea-drinking routine. At this time, even if all the administrative work was done, he still had to wait until the end of the official hours before leaving. What he did during this waiting period didn't matter as long as it was within the bounds of propriety.

Chen Xi continued his habit of taking afternoon naps, dozing off in the administrative hall until he was finally shaken awake by Jian Yong, who had just finished his day's work.

"Oh, oh, is it time already?" Chen Xi yawned and prepared to leave, only to be stopped by Jian Yong grabbing his shoulder.

"It's not time yet!" Jian Yong dragged Chen Xi back and pressed him into the main seat. "It's not the third quarter of the Wei hour yet."

"Then why did you wake me up? What's the issue? There shouldn't be anything big left." Chen Xi, half-awake, asked in a daze, looking much like the revered Guan Yu but actually just not fully awake.

"There's nothing urgent. I just wanted to see the contract you made with Su Shuang and Zhang Shiping." Jian Yong shook his head. "You set up the big framework and goals, and we're just filling in the details. There's nothing we can't handle after your explanations."

"Hmm, it's right there on top of that pile of bamboo slips. You can reach it easily. Why wake me?" Chen Xi said, his eyes still unfocused and sleepy, without even the energy to get annoyed.

With Chen Xi's permission, Jian Yong picked up the white cloth and began reading it. As he read, he nodded slightly in agreement, until he reached the last three clauses, where he began to frown.

Chen Xi, now more awake after a cup of tea, looked at Jian Yong and asked, "If you have any questions, just ask directly." He yawned again, feeling relaxed with Jian Yong, who didn't mind small breaches of etiquette. If it had been someone like Chen Qun, a noble among scholars, the latter might have felt slighted by such casual behavior.

"There's nothing wrong with the earlier clauses, which are mainly about processing methods and financial distribution. But I don't quite understand the last three clauses," Jian Yong said, looking up.

"Oh, the earlier parts are just fillers. The last three are the important ones. Zilong, you should listen too. It might be useful for you in the future," Chen Xi said, turning to Zhao Yun, who was also handling administrative tasks nearby.

Zhao Yun lifted his head, glanced at the white cloth Jian Yong handed him, and quickly understood the gist. He then raised his head, ready to hear Chen Xi's explanation.

"It's nothing much. The third-to-last clause is to prevent them from monopolizing the entire market and to set up for the second-to-last clause. The second-to-last clause is to insert some of our people into various levels. Once we have more industries under our control, we can cross-insert agents and establish a single-line contact system. This will give us a safe and functional intelligence network. For now, it's better than having no clue about things," Chen Xi explained with a smile.

The news of Sun Jian's death had come too late for Liu Bei's side, despite someone specifically informing them. Without such intel, they would have been in the dark for a long time, missing out on significant opportunities.

"Indeed, that's a good idea. Inserting our people with official endorsements at various levels makes it hard for anyone to notice. As for single-line contacts..." Jian Yong trailed off, hinting at Chen Xi to elaborate.

"The higher level never contacts the lower level directly, using a special method for communication instead. As for what special method, you can think of something. Reporting information is also done in a special way. The main point is to keep the higher and lower levels unaware of each other," Chen Xi shrugged.

"How can we ensure the information is correctly passed from lower to higher levels?" Jian Yong, though perhaps not as brilliant as some famous strategists, was no fool and quickly identified a potential flaw.

"There will be an external overseer to verify the identities of the transmitting parties and to relay critical information in urgent situations. However, they only get one chance. After exposure, whether or not they are compromised, they will be reassigned elsewhere or brought back," Chen Xi explained solemnly.

“Brilliant!” Zhao Yun’s eyes lit up with understanding. Before he could speak, Jian Yong echoed the sentiment.

“Oh, since you think it’s brilliant, Yong, I’ll leave this task to you,” Chen Xi said casually, throwing the responsibility at Jian Yong.

Zhao Yun stifled a laugh while Jian Yong looked exasperated. He shouldn’t have spoken up. According to Chen Xi’s logic, if someone understood the importance and intricacies of a task, it was best left to them to handle it. Zhao Yun had fallen into this trap before, and now it was Jian Yong’s turn.

“Of course, the last clause is the most important,” Chen Xi said seriously after drinking some tea. “The final clause forms the basis for all the previous ones. Whether it’s inserting our people, managing conflicts, or replacing personnel, this clause positions us in the right.”

“Hm?” Zhao Yun and Jian Yong both frowned in confusion. Zhao Yun finally asked, “What about the interpretive rights?”

“Yeah, the so-called final interpretive rights mean I can interpret the contract however I want. If I say it’s black, it’s black, even if it’s white. As long as the merchants don’t cross us, I don’t mind making them cough up everything, principal and interest,” Chen Xi explained nonchalantly.

“That could cause a lot of trouble. It will be difficult to find willing business partners in the future,” Jian Yong said, not disapproving of Chen Xi’s methods but concerned about potential damage to their reputation.

“Don’t worry. The great Confucian scholars will understand,” Chen Xi replied with a smirk.

“...” Jian Yong stared at Chen Xi in speechless disbelief.

“I’m just joking. It shows our moral integrity, and any issues arise from the merchants’ lack of education. That’s all,” Chen Xi said dismissively, shifting the blame to the merchants.

“Chen Xi, enough joking. Be serious. You know what I’m getting at,” Jian Yong insisted.

“Yes, I understand. Let me put it this way: as long as the merchants don’t betray us, I won’t use those final interpretive rights. If I ever do, it will become part of the law,” Chen Xi said, pulling a document from a pile of bamboo slips.

Jian Yong sighed after a long pause. “You’re preparing for future problems while also ensuring they can’t take advantage of us,” he said, laughing as he handed the document to Zhao Yun.

“You should call it being proactive. After all, I’m doing this for the people’s benefit, so they don’t get cheated,” Chen Xi shrugged. “It’s getting really boring. I wonder if General Guan and General Zhang have located the main positions of the bandits in Mount Tai.”