

Mythical 66

Chapter 66: Mi Zizhong and Lu Zijing

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Mi Zhu and Lu Su didn't have much of a relationship. Although both were powerful figures, their paths had never crossed until now. This joint visit was purely coincidental, meeting by chance. Both men were refined and carried the demeanor of gentlemen.

Mi Zhu didn't feel inferior due to his status as a merchant, and Lu Su didn't look down on Mi Zhu with the worldly views that often belittle merchants. Their conversation was pleasant, but it ended there. Lu Su didn't refute Mi Zhu's views on Taishan, and Mi Zhu didn't comment on Lu Su's analysis of the political landscape. They both just touched on their respective areas of expertise.

A wise person doesn't make judgments on what they don't understand. So, Lu Su didn't say much about Mi Zhu's analysis of Taishan's commerce. Even though his own intuition suggested that the situation wasn't as simple as Mi Zhu portrayed, he chose to listen quietly and integrate this new perspective into his own understanding of Taishan.

On the other hand, Mi Zhu, during their conversations, marveled at Lu Su. He saw the young scholar as someone destined for high office. Despite lacking experience and exposure, Lu Su's unique insights and sharp vision impressed Mi Zhu, who had traversed the business world extensively. Perhaps there were some flaws, but Lu Su's capability was undeniable.

Using the natural smoothness of a seasoned merchant, Mi Zhu gradually closed the gap between him and Lu Su. Before they realized it, Lu Su had moved from the envoy's carriage to Mi Zhu's.

Chen Xi looked at Xu Chu, who stood like a wall beside Liu Bei, feeling somewhat conflicted. He hadn't decided on a suitable role for Xu Chu. Making him just a bodyguard seemed like a waste, but putting him in a command position was risky, considering Xu Chu's historical behavior. For now, Chen Xi chose to put it aside.

However, Xu Chu seemed very dedicated to his task of protecting Liu Bei. He appeared to enjoy this role, carrying the fine steel broadsword Chen Xi had made for him and shadowing Liu Bei everywhere. At the

government office or Liu Bei's residence, Xu Chu would stand menacingly at the door, scaring off anyone who dared approach.

For Chen Xi, this wasn't a big deal. Initially, he found Xu Chu's fierce smile a bit annoying, but over time, it became a source of amusement. It's amazing what you can get used to.

Having gotten used to Xu Chu's fierce smile, Chen Xi also became accustomed to Xu Chu's enormous appetite. Chen Xi ate from a palm-sized celadon bowl, although he would have preferred white porcelain but hadn't figured out how to produce it yet. He even tasked artisans to research it without success.

So, celadon bowls it was. Chen Xi didn't mind too much. He was content with two bowls of rice. Zhao Yun, despite his slender build, could eat five times as much as Chen Xi without any problem. Guan Yu and Zhang Fei could eat even more. As for Xu Chu, Chen Xi had lost count of how many bowls he ate.

Although Zhao Yun mentioned that warriors derived their energy from food, the amount Xu Chu consumed was staggering. After sparring with Xu Chu once, Zhao Yun invited him to eat steamed buns. Three steamers of buns, along with pig trotters, only filled Xu Chu halfway. Zhao Yun instantly understood why Guan Yu and Zhang Fei would avoid sparring with Xu Chu after a match.

In this time without even Liu Bei's salary, everyone was living frugally. Sparring with a glutton could force one to hunt wild game for food. Better to save sparring for when there was plenty of food and money.

"Lu Zijing from Dongcheng greets Xuande Gong." "Mi Zizhong from Xu Province greets Xuande Gong."

As Lu Su and Mi Zhu's carriage approached the government office, Lu Su's sharp eyes noticed a group waiting outside, seemingly for their arrival.

Soon, Mi Zhu also saw the group waiting by the government office. Unlike Lu Su, he had a more discerning eye or, at least, wasn't as proud as the current Lu Su. After years of navigating the business world, Mi Zhu couldn't afford to act arrogantly.

Mi Zhu tugged at Lu Su, not giving him a chance to argue or resist. He didn't want such a capable person to be labeled as arrogant from the start. Nor did he want Liu Bei to lose a potential talented minister due to a moment of displeasure.

The scenes they had witnessed along the way had pained Mi Zhu, but also showed him vast business opportunities. The expenditure might be over a billion, but the profits created were staggering. Excellent merchants never shy away from risks, and Mi Zhu saw immense potential profits in Taishan's huge investments. He was willing to bet on Liu Bei!

Having placed his bet on Liu Bei, Mi Zhu naturally hoped Lu Su would join Liu Bei as well. This way, he would have a supportive friend within Liu Bei's ranks. He admired Lu Su's talent, even though he wasn't yet renowned. The abilities Lu Su displayed on their journey made Mi Zhu's heart tremble. Years of experience told him that Lu Su was worth betting on, and bringing him into Liu Bei's fold could be his greatest support.

"At ease, at ease. I've heard that Mi Zizhong, one of the five great merchant families, and the renowned Lu Zijing have come to visit Taishan. The gloom from the departure of the Zhen family and the lack of notable scholars has lifted. I've prepared a modest meal and wine. Please, join us and impart your wisdom," Liu Bei said sincerely, helping them up.

Chen Xi turned his head away, trying to hide his amusement. Sure enough, Mi Zhu was moved, his cheeks flushed with emotion, almost ready to bow down.

This wasn't the Spring and Autumn period when rulers would hold reins for scholars. Liu Bei's warm reception was already significant, and his heartfelt words were even more impactful. Even Lu Su looked moved.

While Chen Xi might be immune to such gestures, ancient scholars were not. Lu Su, in a bit of a daze, followed Liu Bei into his residence next to the government office. As Liu Bei had promised, a modest meal and wine were already prepared. This was supposed to be Chen Xi and his group's dinner, now turned into a banquet with just a small bronze pot added.

Seated at the head, Liu Bei introduced Mi Zhu and Lu Su to everyone, causing them to pay special attention to Chen Xi and Zhao Yun. Despite hearing that Chen Xi was under twenty and that Zhao Yun's martial prowess rivaled Lu Bu's, without the ferocity typical of warriors but rather resembling a scholar, they hadn't fully believed it. Seeing them now, the rumors proved true.

During the meal, Mi Zhu addressed Liu Bei with a changed tone, having already studied Liu Bei before coming. Seeing Taishan's construction had initially pained him, but once he changed his tone, he showed no more hesitation.

Having acknowledged Liu Bei as his lord, Mi Zhu frequently hinted at Lu Su to join Liu Bei's ranks during the banquet. Mi Zhu knew his actions weren't entirely fair, but for the sake of Lu Su's potential, Liu Bei's forces, and his own future, Mi Zhu hoped Lu Su would seize this opportunity to join Liu Bei.