

Mythical 91

Chapter 91: Gan Ning, Become the Naval Commander...

After downing a cup of wine, the atmosphere instantly became lively. Lu Jun and Gan Ning drank away their grudges, and their relationship immediately warmed. One praised the other for his composure in adversity, while the other modestly claimed to be timid. One admired the other's martial prowess, and the other politely said he still had much to learn and practice.

Lu Jun wasn't foolish. He could sense Liu Bei's sincerity and was naturally willing to get closer to him. He wouldn't offend Liu Bei over this matter, especially since the biggest hurdle between them was Gan Ning's recent actions. Lu Jun readily brushed the matter aside, much to Liu Bei's satisfaction. Gan Ning, already impressed by Lu Jun's calm demeanor during the journey, found himself further charmed by his deliberate flattery, making the host and guest enjoy each other's company.

Soon, Yu Jin arrived with the forged book. Handing it to Chen Xi, who then presented it to Lu Jun with a smile, he said, "Even though you and Xingba have cleared up the misunderstanding, Lord Xuande's previous words still stand. This is a gift for you, Juncai."

"Zichuan, there's no need for this. As you said, Xingba and I have resolved our differences. There's no need for a thank-you gift. Please take it back," Lu Jun declined without even looking at the item.

"Hahaha, once a gift is given, it cannot be taken back. Besides, Juncai, you haven't even seen what it is." With that, Chen Xi handed the book to Lu Jun. "Take a look first. I'm sure Lord Xuande's choice of gift will suit you."

Lu Jun accepted the book and opened it. He was initially surprised and then quickly engrossed in the stories. The more he read, the more impressed he became. Soon, he finished the eighteen short stories and looked at Chen Xi with a furrowed brow. "Juncai accepts this gift with thanks. Please keep an eye out for the second volume of this marvelous book. It's regrettable that it's incomplete!"

"Of course," Chen Xi replied with a smile. "As I said, Lord Xuande's choice of gift is perfect for you."

"A fine book of Thirty-Six Stratagems, written as stories of the author's life, though unfortunately incomplete," Lu Jun said with a look of regret. Nonetheless, he quickly wrapped it in silk and tucked it into his robe, fearing that Chen Xi might retract it due to his earlier words.

"Haha..." Chen Xi chuckled without further comment. In fact, the book he wrote was based on a TV series about Sun Bin's life, transforming his experiences into thirty-six stratagems. He remembered this version well and naturally wrote it in this style.

The banquet was a success, with the host and guests all in high spirits. The leftover food was cleared away by the maids. Shivering slightly, Chen Xi hurried home. Despite the rain being summoned by Lu Su's magic, it showed no signs of stopping, and even seemed to be getting heavier, possibly turning the pleasant autumn weather into a cold season.

Gan Ning, of course, pledged loyalty to Liu Bei, who appointed him as a subordinate official, due to his limited titles. Liu Bei's current rank as General of Pacification was fully staffed, so Gan Ning was listed under Chen Xi's jurisdiction.

When Chen Xi was about to assign military duties to Gan Ning, Lu Su handed him a document with a wry smile. Chen Xi was taken aback to find that Gan Ning was still listed as the Deputy Prefect of Shu County, with a salary of 600 stone, equivalent to Lu Su's rank.

"Are you kidding me?" Chen Xi turned to Lu Su, but his mind had already pieced everything together, understanding why such a brave and talented individual like Gan Ning had not been accepted by anyone.

"It's true," Lu Su replied with a bitter smile. "Xingba has been out of office for two years and nine months, but Shu County still holds his position."

"Oh, I see," Chen Xi nodded.

"What should we do? Clashing with Yizhou now isn't ideal. Even though they can't reach Taishan due to the distance, they have the capability to cause us trouble. Moreover, he was once the Chief of Records. If he mobilizes the royal family, we will struggle to cope," Lu Su said.

"Don't worry. Call Xingba here. This matter is easily resolved," Chen Xi replied without looking up. With the situation changing, the naval training plans needed to be restructured, but thankfully Liu Yan's days were numbered, otherwise the entire plan would have to be scrapped and redone.

"Alright, it's the only way," Lu Su said, nodding. Compared to Taishan's current situation, Gan Ning's importance was relatively low. After all, Taishan neither relied on the Yellow River nor the Yangtze River. Without Yang Guang's Grand Canal, developing a navy was quite troublesome.

"Just call him," Chen Xi said, raising an eyebrow. "Don't say anything extra. Gan Ning is an important general under Lord Xuande, especially for the future. So, no talk of giving up."

Lu Su sighed. He understood Gan Ning's importance. After all, Taishan had cavalry, infantry, training, and commanders. The only piece missing was a navy, essential for future southern campaigns.

Soon, an excited Gan Ning arrived. "Greetings, Governor. What does the Governor require of Xingba?"

"I have two tasks for you," Chen Xi said, looking at Gan Ning. "First, this task is very dangerous. It requires a brave and resourceful general, skilled in water combat and leadership..."

Before Chen Xi could finish, Gan Ning thumped his chest. "Governor, just tell me what to do. You can trust in Xingba's abilities."

"Good. As you know, there are no large rivers or lakes near Taishan, making naval training difficult. So, I plan to send you to the offshore waters of Qingzhou for training. As for ships, don't worry. The Lu family has sea vessels, and the Mi family has money," Chen Xi quickly explained.

Ignoring Gan Ning's excitement, Chen Xi continued, "Due to a shortage of manpower, I won't assign anyone to assist you. You will take your men to the offshore waters of Qingzhou. There, you will be the commander. Your men will be the core team. You can do whatever you need there. I'll allocate twenty million coins to you. I expect a well-trained navy in one year."

"Zichuan, one year is a bit short. The people of Qingzhou are landlubbers..." Gan Ning was so excited he forgot to address Chen Xi as Governor, directly using his courtesy name. Despite his excitement, he understood the risks of failing to fulfill the mission.

"I didn't say you couldn't reform the river pirates of the Yangtze, the bandits of the Yellow River, or any other pirates. Listen carefully, once you're there, you're the commander. You can even attack other states if you want. I'll give you the highest authority! Just give me the navy I need!" Chen Xi roared. His

tone was just short of calling Gan Ning an idiot for not understanding he could recruit and reform pirates.