

MYTHICAL VERSION OF THREE KINGDOM

Chapter 11: My Axe Can't Wait Any Longer...

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Despite their defeat, the allied forces in the camp maintained their usual routine of eating and drinking. Outwardly, they were cordial, but there was plenty of underhanded behavior behind the scenes.

The coalition had arrived at Sishui Pass, and Sun Jian was waiting for the alliance to avenge his lieutenant, Zu Mao. He had no intention of making another move himself. Having been deceived once, he was determined not to be fooled again.

Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei were also in the main tent, along with Chen Xi, who knew that the real show was about to begin. The coalition's rules were lax; as long as you were a strategist or general for a warlord, you could tag along. Chen Xi had even once followed Yuan Shao into a meeting without anyone noticing, likely being mistaken for one of Yuan Shao's advisors.

Liu Bei had been visibly upset that time, but upon finding Chen Xi still in his own tent, he realized Chen Xi was just taking advantage of the situation to get a meal. Since then, Liu Bei made sure to bring Chen Xi along.

Liu Bei's entourage was large, but Cao Cao's was even larger. Xiahou brothers, Cao Hong, Cao Ren, and Le Jin sat behind him, a whole row of Cao Cao's men. Other warlords had maybe two or three generals with them, and only a few named strategists were present in the entire tent.

Over the past few days, Liu Bei had become more familiar with the others, gaining confidence and even joining in their boasting and banter without feeling out of place. His demeanor had grown more imposing, taking on the airs of a warlord.

Liu Bei's newfound confidence wasn't just from mingling with the other warlords but from his inherent ambition. If he hadn't had this drive, he might still be making straw sandals.

"Zichuan, stop eating," Guan Yu nudged Chen Xi, who was still gnawing on beef.

"Do we need to act?" Zhang Fei whispered.

"Let's see how things unfold," Chen Xi wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"Report, Sishui Pass's commander, Hua Xiong, has come to challenge us. He has already slain several of our generals!" The messenger arrived just after the warlords' own intelligence.

The warlords dismissed Hua Xiong with disdain. He had only five thousand troops at Sishui Pass, while they had fifty thousand. For Hua Xiong to challenge them was seen as suicidal. It seemed impossible that the coalition would lack a suitable general to face him.

"Who will take the field and slay Hua Xiong to avenge our men?" Yuan Shao asked calmly, indifferent to who might win or lose the duel.

Immediately, a general clad in iron armor, wielding a steel spear, stepped forward. "I will go!"

"This is my general, Yu She!" Yuan Shu boasted proudly.

"Very well. General Yu She, if you kill Hua Xiong, you will be credited with the first merit," Yuan Shao said, delighted. If Yu She killed Hua Xiong, it would look good for Yuan Shu and, by extension, the Yuan clan. If he failed, it would weaken Yuan Shu's position, consolidating Yuan Shao's leadership.

"Hey, Second Brother, what do you think of this Yu She?" Chen Xi nudged Guan Yu.

"He's doomed. Hua Xiong defeated Sun Jian and killed Zu Mao. Yu She is just a minor general who hasn't even refined his inner Qi. He will surely die," Guan Yu said dismissively.

Sure enough, after a short time, the messenger returned. "General Yu She has been beheaded by Hua Xiong!"

Guan Yu's eyes gleamed with a keen interest in facing a worthy opponent.

"What?" Yuan Shu was stunned, unable to believe that his trusted general had been killed so swiftly.

"Who will face Hua Xiong next to restore our honor?" Yuan Shao demanded.

Seeing Guan Yu about to rise, Chen Xi quickly grabbed him.

"Zichuan, why stop me? I believe Hua Xiong uses brute force and has likely reached the pinnacle of inner Qi refinement. He will be a formidable opponent," Guan Yu whispered.

"Wait a moment. Hua Xiong hasn't fully revealed his strength yet. Let's see what he's capable of first," Chen Xi advised, though surprised by Hua Xiong's prowess.

According to Guan Yu, a martial artist's progression started with refining their first Qi, becoming a minor master. The next level was inner Qi refinement, making them a significant master. The pinnacle of this was transforming Qi into Gang (hard Qi), reaching the ultimate limit of refinement. Beyond that was separating Qi from the body, and if someone reached this stage, they could even challenge Xiang Yu.

Just then, Han Fu, Governor of Jizhou, spoke up. "I have a great general, Pan Feng, who can slay Hua Xiong!"

"General Pan Feng, will you take the field?" Yuan Shao asked with a hint of sarcasm, eyeing Jizhou as a valuable territory.

Pan Feng, who had been sitting behind Han Fu, stood up, finishing the meat from a lamb leg. "I will go! My axe has been itching for a fight!"

Standing over nine feet tall, Pan Feng was a formidable figure in full armor, wielding a massive axe that gleamed coldly in the light.

Chen Xi frowned, glancing at Guan Yu. "Second Brother, what do you think of him?"

"Born with great strength and at the peak of transforming Qi into Gang. If he takes one more step, even I would find it difficult to defeat him," Guan Yu said cautiously. Though his Qi refinement was superior, he was wary of Pan Feng's immense physical power.

Chen Xi's eyebrow twitched. Pan Feng was indeed powerful, but Hua Xiong had managed to kill such a formidable opponent in a few moves. It seemed Yuan Shao had likely set Pan Feng up for failure.

Watching Yuan Shao, Chen Xi sighed. Pan Feng was probably being sent to his death. According to Guan Yu, Pan Feng was already a top-tier master and could advance further through experience. In wartime, survival meant progress; stagnation meant death.

Hua Xiong had grown arrogant after slaying several coalition generals, looking down on them. With fifty thousand troops, the coalition seemed incapable of producing a worthy opponent.

Sitting on his horse, Hua Xiong stared at the coalition camp, sensing the barrier over his head weakening with his growing courage. He hoped to challenge Lu Bu again, even if only to experience that godlike power.

As he mused, he saw a dark figure rushing towards him, exuding immense pressure. This invigorated Hua Xiong, who had come prepared to die, ready to either advance further or perish.