

MYTHICAL VERSION OF THREE KINGDOM

Chapter 4: Encounter on the Road

...

By the time Chen Xi arrived in Chenliu, the group he intended to join had already left. Cao Mengde had already sent out the proclamation, and judging by the pace, if Chen Xi could make it to Hulao Pass, he might meet Liu Xuande and his two brothers, who were still relatively unknown at this point.

"Young master, where are we going now?" Chen Lan asked as she brewed a pot of tea for Chen Xi, standing by his side despite his repeated invitations for her to sit.

"Let's go to Suanzao. Though we're not well-known, I'm a scholar from the Chen family of Yingchuan, which should help us blend in," Chen Xi said helplessly. His original plan was to follow Cao Cao's troops, as Cao Cao, known as a righteous man at this time, would not harm someone tagging along.

"Oh, young master, shall we leave now?" Chen Lan tilted her head and asked.

"Let's go. Maybe we'll find another group to join along the way," Chen Xi downed his tea and headed towards the carriage. Before leaving, Fan Liang had given him ample travel funds, enough to last him a few years.

Using a layer of mental power to make their carriage less noticeable, Chen Xi got in and continued explaining mental extraction techniques to Chen Lan, though progress was slow.

"Young master, we might have to camp out tonight," the housekeeper said with a bitter smile. "I think we took the wrong path at the fork earlier."

"Hah, it's fine," Chen Xi said, feeling a bit embarrassed. He had insisted on this path earlier. He handed out rice cakes to the others and started eating his with cold water. "Rice cakes aren't too bad."

"Look, young master, there's smoke over there," Chen Lan, who had just taken a bite of her rice cake, noticed a plume of smoke rising to the north.

"Someone's there! Let's go see if we can get a meal. Rice cakes are terrible," Chen Xi immediately contradicted himself and directed the housekeeper to head towards the smoke.

As the saying goes, a distant view of a mountain is deceptive. They saw a thin plume of smoke from afar, but it turned out to be a large area as they got closer.

"Such a large setup, could it be a lord's army?" Chen Xi hesitated, stopping at a distance. Lords in this era could be good or bad. Some might protect you if you followed them, while others might drive you away or even rob you.

"Young master, should we go check it out?" Chen Lan asked curiously.

"We're already so close, it would be a waste not to. I'll use a little spell to sneak a peek," Chen Xi said, wrapping himself in mental power to blend into the surroundings. Originally, this spell had many flaws, but Chen Xi's improvements had made it quite effective.

Sneaking closer, Chen Xi saw a large camp and many white horses. He felt better when he recognized the flag at the center—it was General Gongsun Zan.

"Who goes there!" Just as Chen Xi was about to call his housekeeper and maid over for a meal, a thunderous shout nearly deafened him. A dark-skinned man leaped over ten meters from the camp towards him.

"Thud!" The man landed with such force that he left a large crater in the ground.

The impact shook Chen Xi out of his concealment, leaving him disheveled. He frowned at the man, his mental power alerting him to extreme danger.

"Who are you to spy on our camp?" The man's voice boomed like thunder, and cavalry quickly surrounded Chen Xi.

"Would you believe me if I said I was just looking for a meal?" Despite his fear, Chen Xi calmed down. In this chaotic world, people like him were valuable resources. As long as he demonstrated his worth, the lords would overlook minor issues.

Before the man could respond, Chen Xi continued, "I saw the smoke from afar and thought it was a household, hoping to find shelter. When I realized it was an army, I came to investigate. Not all armies treat wandering scholars well. Some protect us, while others... well, it's best not to mention."

The man frowned at Chen Xi's words. "Do you have proof?"

"The spell I just used should show you that my training is different from yours. If I were a martial artist, I wouldn't pose a threat to you. As for mental power, as long as I stay by your side, I'm confident you can control me at any time," Chen Xi's eyes gleamed with cunning. He was betting that this man was Zhang Yide. Based on his strength, build, and voice, it seemed likely.

"True enough. If you are a scholar, tell me where you are from. Our troops from Liaoxi won't harm you," the man nodded, accepting Chen Xi's reasoning. His confidence in his strength was unshakable.

"Chen Xi of Yingchuan, courtesy name Zichuan. I believe you are Zhang Yide?" Chen Xi replied.

"You know me?" The man was surprised, then pleased. He paid no attention to Chen Xi's mention of Yingchuan.

"Well," Chen Xi shrugged. Missing Cao Cao and meeting Liu Bei was a decent alternative. At this time, Gongsun Zan had not yet turned tyrannical and wouldn't mind a few followers.

"Third Brother, I heard you caught a spy?" Another voice came from behind Zhang Fei before he could speak further.

Chen Xi saw a man of average appearance with large ears and long arms, accompanied by a red-faced man, clearly Guan Yu. Chen Xi sighed, realizing this world leaned more towards the "Romance of the Three Kingdoms."

"Scholar Chen Xi of Yingchuan greets Lord Xuande," Chen Xi bowed to Liu Bei. No matter what, he was now in their hands and couldn't afford to offend them.