

MYTHICAL VERSION OF THREE KINGDOM

Chapter 5: Meeting the Various Warlords of the Land

Chen Xi clearly saw Liu Bei's surprise and couldn't help but smile inwardly. At this point in time, almost no one knew Liu Xuande. He wasn't yet the Imperial Uncle or the King of Hanzhong; he was just a commoner, unknown to most.

"Since you're a scholar, is there anything you need help with before coming to my camp?" Liu Bei asked with a hint of joy, offering Chen Xi an easy way out.

"I've been traveling for a long time. I saw smoke in the distance and hoped to find shelter for the night, not realizing it was the camp of your troops," Chen Xi responded smoothly, praising Liu Bei. Missing Cao Mengde's ride but catching Liu Xuande's wasn't too bad.

Chen Xi understood Liu Bei's current situation well. Liu Bei was clearly mingling in Gongsun Zan's army to familiarize himself with the various warlords. He had no soldiers, no territory, no money, and no resources. Chen Xi guessed that Liu Bei might not yet have grand ambitions, as ambition grows with strength.

"Please, I am not worthy of being called a general," Liu Bei said with an embarrassed smile, though he was clearly pleased.

"I heard that Lord Mengde has issued a proclamation, calling all righteous men to join in the fight against the traitor Dong Zhuo. I want to witness this for myself. For me, traveling the world means meeting the various figures of the land," Chen Xi said with a smile.

Liu Bei was somewhat baffled by Chen Xi's smooth talking. Looking at his two brothers and the two thousand soldiers behind him, he nodded and said, "In that case, Zichuan, prepare your provisions and follow us. My soldiers will not disturb you."

"Thank you, Lord Xuande." Chen Xi smiled and bowed. "I'll be back shortly." He bowed again and left.

"Third Brother, don't cause such a commotion over small matters in the future," Liu Bei said to Zhang Fei, who was still standing by the crater, after Chen Xi had left.

"Big Brother, why bother letting that kid follow us? It's already generous that we didn't capture him. We should just drive him away. Even if we bring him to Suanzao for the alliance, he won't be able to enter. Why let him waste his

time?" Zhang Fei grumbled in his rough voice.

"Ridiculous!" Liu Bei scolded. "There are very few literate people in the world. Why should we offend such people over trivial matters?"

"I can read too..." Zhang Fei mumbled, though his loud voice meant everyone heard it clearly.

"Yide, remember, we are relying on others now. Brother Bogui treats us well due to our past friendship, but there's no need to trouble him over small matters. That young man is a scholar from the Chen family of Yingchuan, one of the prominent families in the land," Liu Bei explained quietly, seeing only his loyal guards from the Yellow Turban days around him.

"Sigh, Big Brother harbors lofty ambitions, yet we are constrained by circumstances," Guan Yu said, feeling somewhat disheartened. Since the Yellow Turban Rebellion, their patriotic fervor had been repeatedly dampened by the Han Dynasty, making Liu Bei more tactful and less impulsive.

"Enough, let's not dwell on it. There will come a time when we can make a difference. Don't lose heart, Second and Third Brothers," Liu Bei said, forcing a smile but then regaining his resolve.

Meanwhile, Chen Xi sneaked back, finding Chen Lan worried but startled when he appeared beside her.

"Young Master, you're back," said the housekeeper, hiding the hand holding the whip behind him when he saw it was Chen Xi.

"No need to worry so much," Chen Xi laughed. "We've met good people. Just follow the troops ahead; they are also heading to the Suanzao alliance."

"Young Master, is this safe?" The housekeeper, with more life experience, knew the destructiveness of armies in this era. Soldiers were only slightly better than bandits.

"It's fine. The leader is a capable man. Let's go. Don't worry, just follow them. If we're lucky, we might even see Dong Zhuo and witness this renowned Xiliang warrior. Young Dong Zhuo's charisma impressed many," Chen Xi said with a peculiar smile.

Thinking of young Dong Zhuo, or young Yuan Shao who dared to confront him, or the middle-aged Cao Mengde who unified the Central Plains, Chen Xi couldn't help but feel they all had the makings of great leaders. Unfortunately, when the fate of the world fell into their hands, they made the worst choices.

If history could be different, with Dong Zhuo showing his early ambition and valor, defeating the eighteen warlords wouldn't have been too difficult. Li Ru's ruthlessness, the invincibility of the top warrior, and the strength of the Xiliang cavalry and Bingzhou wolf riders would have made it a tough fight for the unprepared warlords.

Chen Xi was eager to see the legendary Lu Bu, the best horse Red Hare, and compared to Zhang Fei, he believed Lu Bu could indeed be a human missile. He was determined to witness the epic battle at Hulao Pass, a fight between non-humans!

Following Liu Bei's troops leisurely, Chen Xi didn't have many interactions with Liu Bei or Guan Yu, except for Zhang Fei occasionally coming over.

In this safe environment with plenty of free time, Chen Xi felt it necessary to think about his future. In this chaotic era, being unprepared could mean total annihilation. While fame was important to many, Chen Xi knew from history that aligning with a good team was essential to avoid a fate like Confucian scholar Kong Rong's. Fame couldn't feed you, only strength could.

Chen Xi glanced at the troops ahead, deciding to stick with them. Besides the three families of Cao, Sun, and Liu, the others weren't worth considering. These three had stood the test of time, unlike the others.

As Cao Cao once evaluated, "Yuan Shu of Huainan is a dry bone in a grave; Yuan Shao of Jizhou is blustering but cowardly, making big plans but lacking decisiveness, cherishing life but forgetting righteousness; Liu Biao of Jingzhou is unworthy of his reputation; Sun Ce relies on his father's name; Liu Zhang, though a member of the imperial clan, is merely a watchdog guarding his territory. The rest are mere mediocrities!" This comment belittled all other warlords. Later, when Sun Quan took over, Cao Cao's praise of him as "a son should be like Sun Zhongmou" implied that while Sun Quan was better than Yuan Shao's and Liu Biao's sons, he was still just a junior compared to Cao Cao.