

MYTHICAL VERSION OF THREE KINGDOM

Chapter 8: Mixing In

"General Gongsun is very generous to Lord Xuande," Chen Xi remarked with a smile. "It seems General Gongsun wants Lord Xuande to make an impression in front of the other righteous warriors. Three hundred cavalry and two thousand infantry make a considerable small force."

"Xuande feels unworthy of such kindness," Liu Bei sighed. Gongsun Zan's generosity left him feeling at a loss.

"Just don't forget your old brothers when you succeed in the future," Chen Xi joked. Thinking of the future rescue of Xuzhou, although Gongsun Zan might not be optimistic about it, he still provided Liu Bei with five thousand infantry and cavalry and even sent Zhao Yun to assist. It was unlikely that Gongsun Zan was unaware of Zhao Yun's admiration for Liu Bei, yet he still supported them wholeheartedly, showing his unwavering loyalty to his recognized comrades.

"If I ever achieve success, I will never forget," Liu Bei said earnestly, looking at Chen Xi, who finally realized that Liu Bei's words were not just for Gongsun Zan's ears.

"Hahaha, you'll succeed soon enough," Chen Xi said, turning his head slightly awkwardly. He still wanted to see Cao Cao, Sun Jian, and Yuan Shao, so he couldn't give an immediate answer.

Seeing Chen Xi turn away, Liu Bei felt a bit disappointed but quickly recovered. As long as Chen Xi was by his side, there would be opportunities to win him over.

The next day, the alliance officially began. Liu Bei, representing a small force, appeared at the meeting behind Gongsun Zan, giving Chen Xi the chance to mix in.

Let's talk about the identities of the eighteen warlords:

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First, the Rear General and Governor of Nanyang, Yuan Shu, styled Gonglu, who befriended the wealthy and powerful and was known for his connections.

- Second, the Inspector of Jizhou, Han Fu, styled Wenjie, who was versed in various philosophies and the Nine Classics.

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Third, the Inspector of Yuzhou, Kong Zhou, styled Gongxu, who was eloquent and knowledgeable.

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Fourth, the Inspector of Yanzhou, Liu Dai, styled Gongshan, known for his filial piety, kindness, and humility.

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Fifth, the Governor of Henei, Wang Kuang, styled Gongjie, who was generous and extravagant.

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Sixth, the Governor of Chenliu, Zhang Miao, styled Mengzhuo, who was charitable and ambitious.

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Seventh, the Governor of Dongjun, Qiao Mao, styled Yuanwei, who was kind and intelligent.

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Eighth, the Governor of Shanyang, Yuan Yi, styled Boye, who was honest and cultured.

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Ninth, the Chancellor of Jibei, Bao Xin, styled Yuncheng, who was resourceful and skilled in both civil and military affairs.

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Tenth, the Governor of Beihai, Kong Rong, styled Wenju, known for his hospitality and respect for scholars.

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Eleventh, the Governor of Guangling, Zhang Chao, styled Menggao, who was skilled in martial arts and had a commanding presence.

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Twelfth, the Inspector of Xuzhou, Tao Qian, styled Gongzu, who was benevolent and virtuous.

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Thirteenth, the Governor of Xiliang, Ma Teng, styled Shoucheng, who was renowned among the Qiang and Hu peoples.

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Fourteenth, the Inspector of Youzhou, Gongsun Zan, styled Bogui, who had a commanding presence and a powerful voice.

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Fifteenth, the Governor of Shangdang, Zhang Yang, styled Zhisheng, who was adaptable and brave.

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Sixteenth, the Marquis of Wucheng and Governor of Changsha, Sun Jian, styled Wentai, who was exceptionally brave.

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Seventeenth, the Marquis of Qixiang and Governor of Bohai, Yuan Shao, styled Benchu, from a family of high officials for four generations.

Adding Cao Cao's own force, there were eighteen warlords in total.

Each warlord's force ranged from tens of thousands to a few thousand. Cao Cao and Liu Bei's forces were among the smaller ones, with two to three thousand each. However, as the initiator, Cao Cao naturally had a seat, while Liu Bei's inclusion depended on luck.

Fortunately, during a casual conversation between Cao Cao and Liu Bei, Chen Xi mentioned Liu Bei's identity as a member of the Han royal family. This important information allowed Liu Bei, with his two thousand men, to be recognized and included among the warlords.

As the discussions began, Cao Cao voluntarily gave up the position of leader, leaving the two Yuan brothers from a family of high officials to vie for it. After Cao Cao's gesture of goodwill, the heroic and imposing Yuan Shao smoothly took the position of leader, while Yuan Shu was assigned to oversee supplies.

Liu Bei, now officially among the warlords, found himself sitting beside Tao Qian and Kong Rong, both of whom were interested in Liu Bei's royal lineage. They quickly engaged in a friendly conversation.

Chen Xi, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei sat behind Liu Bei. This time, history took a different turn, with Guan Yu and Zhang Fei also having seats. As a legitimate warlord, even a small one, Liu Bei's entourage had a place, and this provided a protective layer.

With this protection, if Hua Xiong caused trouble later and Guan Yu stepped up to challenge him, Yuan Shu wouldn't dare to offend Liu Bei by belittling Guan Yu. Offending Guan Yu would mean offending everyone present. Even if Yuan Shu was foolish, he wouldn't be that reckless.

"Second Brother, sit here. Remember, you are a general under Lord Xuande, not just any soldier," Chen Xi began to advise Guan Yu. With Liu Bei now considered a legitimate warlord, presenting a formidable front was crucial. Numbers didn't matter as long as their strength was undeniable.

"Hmm?" Guan Yu, startled, stroked his long beard and looked at Chen Xi with slightly opened eyes. "Zichuan, to be honest, I don't understand the situation. How did we end up sitting here?"

"Because we are part of the loyalist army. General Gongsun provided an opportunity, and we took it. With Lord Xuande's royal lineage, as long as we prove our worth, everyone will acknowledge our legitimacy," Chen Xi explained with a smile. He hadn't expected the seemingly proud Guan Yu to be so easy to talk to.

Chen Xi didn't know that Guan Yu's aloofness stemmed from his poor communication skills and stern demeanor, which made him seem cold. However, if he was familiar with someone and recognized their abilities, he was easy to get along with.

"Can we really do that?" Zhang Fei and Guan Yu both looked surprised.

"Yes, we can. Even I find it a bit excessive," Chen Xi chuckled, but there was a hint of mischief in his eyes. "Now it's up to you two generals. If the opportunity arises, you must impress everyone here. Your strength and Lord Xuande's status complement each other. Your performance now will influence Lord Xuande's future position."

"Position?" Guan Yu asked, puzzled.

"Yes, the effort and visibility we put in during this campaign will determine how Dong Zhuo views the loyalist forces. After Dong Zhuo's defeat, he will try to divide the warlords using the Emperor. If Lord Xuande catches his eye, he will become a pawn in Dong Zhuo's strategy, gaining official positions and territory. This foundation is crucial for future development. If you don't want to be under others' control for decades, unable to achieve great things, you must give your best effort now," Chen Xi explained seriously to Guan Yu and Zhang Fei.

This was Chen Xi's analysis: the campaign against Dong Zhuo was a critical opportunity for the warlords to rise. Whether it was Cao Cao, Sun Jian, or Yuan Shao, they all gained what they sought from this campaign.

If Liu Bei could catch Dong Zhuo's attention during this campaign and be used as a pawn to divide the warlords, the gap between Liu Bei and the others would instantly narrow. With the royal lineage as a shield, who could say who would come out on top?