

MYTHICAL VERSION OF THREE KINGDOM

Chapter 9: Yuan Shao and Dong Zhuo of This Era

Seeing Guan Yu and Zhang Fei eagerly preparing for battle, Chen Xi rubbed his chin, realizing he needed to refine his plans. The campaign against Dong Zhuo by the eighteen warlords offered many opportunities for gaining fame, profit, or both—each critically important!

February 190 AD was still quite cold. Sitting on the ground, even with a brazier, Chen Xi shivered slightly, unlike Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, whose physical prowess and Qi made them almost inhuman, able to withstand even Siberian conditions.

Soon, roasted meat and other dishes were served, accompanied by music and dance performances. After everyone had eaten and enjoyed the entertainment, Yuan Shao led the discussion on how to deal with Dong Zhuo. Most believed that victory in this campaign was certain.

First, Cao Cao proposed dividing the forces into five groups: one to attack Sishui Pass, one to feint at Hulao Pass to draw enemy forces, one to flank Luoyang, one to cut off the route between Hangu Pass and Luoyang, and the last to sever the retreat at Xingyang. This plan would utilize their numerical superiority to its fullest, ensuring that even if Dong Zhuo wasn't killed, he would be severely crippled. Unfortunately, this proposal was rejected.

Yuan Shao then proposed a direct assault on Dong Zhuo at Hulao Pass, without any deception, crushing him outright.

To Chen Xi, Yuan Shao's plan was also quite good. If everyone gave their all, it was more direct, effective, and simpler than Cao Cao's plan. This showed that Yuan Shao wasn't a fool at this time. The group quickly agreed to his proposal after brief consideration.

Chen Xi believed Yuan Shao's approach was to use force to intimidate others. It worked well because he held the initiative. He wanted a decisive battle at Hulao Pass, so Dong Zhuo had no choice but to comply, putting everything on the line in one decisive battle.

However, Yuan Shao overlooked, or perhaps intentionally ignored, the selfish motives of the other warlords. He likely hoped they would exhaust each other at Hulao Pass, weakening his future rivals.

For Yuan Shao, this strategy was beneficial and simple. If they lost, it would be blamed on the lack of effort. Given their numerical advantage, they should win if everyone tried their best. If they won, Yuan Shao would be praised for his excellent command. Either way, his position would be strengthened.

With the major strategy settled and Sun Jian assigned the vanguard role to scout ahead, the other warlords leisurely moved towards Hulao Pass. Speed wasn't crucial for this battle.

In Luoyang, Dong Zhuo had already received the news. After a session of berating his subordinates, he calmed down and summoned his generals to plan a counterattack against the intruding forces from the east.

Seated high on his couch, Dong Zhuo looked at his formidable generals, feeling reassured. "The eastern rabble has gathered an army of fifty thousand to challenge us. What do you all think?"

A man stepped forward from among the generals, wearing a golden crown, a multicolored battle robe, Tang armor, and a lion belt. His angular cheeks displayed an overwhelming sense of dominance—it was the Flying General, Lu Bu.

Lu Bu, undeniably the greatest warrior of the Three Kingdoms period, was often surrounded and besieged but never truly defeated, embodying the peak of martial prowess in this era.

"Allow me to ease your worries, Father. These eastern generals are like mice to me. I will personally lead thirty thousand elite cavalry and crush them."

"Excellent, my son Fengxian!" Dong Zhuo laughed heartily. He was very pleased with this son. Back in Luoyang, Ding Yuan had almost killed him thanks to Lu Bu.

Lu Bu had single-handedly breached the defenses set by ten thousand men. Had it not been for his subordinates' desperate efforts and his own skills, Dong Zhuo might have fallen then. Even so, Lu Bu nearly killed Hua Xiong, Guo Si, Li Jue, Fan Chou, Zhang Ji, and Zhang Xiu, proving his unparalleled strength.

As Dong Zhuo prepared to order Lu Bu to eliminate the eastern invaders, another man stepped forward. "Why use a bull knife to kill a chicken? Let me handle these eastern mice. I promise to make them flee in disarray!"

"Good! With such fierce generals, why should I fear the eastern rabble? Hua Xiong, listen to my command."

"At your service!"

"You will lead fifty thousand troops to defend Sishui Pass and prevent any sneak attacks from the eastern rebels."

"Understood!"

"Xu Rong, listen to my command."

"At your service!"

"You will lead fifty thousand troops to defend Hulao Pass without fail."

"Understood," Xu Rong replied firmly.

"Fan Chou, Zhang Ji, you two will lead one hundred thousand infantry to defend the key positions around Luoyang."

"Understood!"

"Li Jue, Guo Si, you two will lead fifty thousand cavalry to defend Hangu Pass. If Han Sui makes any suspicious moves, execute him immediately."

"Understood!"

"The rest of you will monitor Luoyang. If anyone dares to collude with the eastern rebels, they will be executed without mercy!" All the generals responded in unison.

At this point, Dong Zhuo still had some competence. Unfortunately, after retreating to Chang'an, he became complacent, indulging in luxury and losing his ambition. As the saying goes, "Wine is a poison in the intestines, lust is a blade that scrapes the bones, wealth is a fierce tiger down the mountain, and

anger is the root of trouble." Back in Chang'an, Dong Zhuo succumbed to all these vices, becoming a stepping stone for others in the chaotic times.

After the alliance of the warlords concluded, each returned to their camps. Liu Bei's camp was near Gongsun Zan's, but now they were independent rather than dependent on him, recognized as a small warlord, with supplies distributed accordingly.

When Liu Bei returned from chatting with Gongsun Zan, he found Chen Xi with Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, discussing future events. However, it was more like Chen Xi lecturing while Guan Yu and Zhang Fei listened.

"Thank you, sir, for your recent assistance. I have nothing to repay you with," Liu Bei said as he entered the tent, bowing deeply to Chen Xi.

Unlike the slow-witted Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, Liu Bei understood the significance of sitting among the warlords today. Previously, he had only imagined such a thing. Now, he had effortlessly mingled with the likes of Tao Qian and Kong Rong.

Never before had Liu Bei dared to dream of mingling with high-ranking officials, engaging in casual conversations with them. Although he had the ambition, his humble origins had always left a trace of insecurity deep within him.