

Romance of the Three Kingdoms written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century, is a Chinese historical novel based upon events in the turbulent years near the end of the Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms era of China, starting in 169 and ending with the reunification of the land in 280.

Cao Cao declares himself Chancellor and leads his troops to attack southern China after uniting the north. He is defeated twice at Xinye by Liu Bei's forces but Liu loses the city as well. Liu leads his men and the civilians of Xinye on an exodus southwards and they arrive at Jiangxia where Liu establishes a foothold against Cao Cao.

To resist Cao Cao, Liu Bei sends Zhuge Liang to persuade Sun Quan to form an alliance. Zhuge succeeds in his diplomatic mission and remains in Jiangdong as a temporary advisor to Sun Quan. Sun places Zhou Yu in command of the armies of Jiangdong (Eastern Wu) in preparation for an upcoming war with Cao Cao. Zhou feels that Zhuge will become a future threat to Eastern Wu and he tries to kill Zhuge on a few occasions but he fails and decides to co-operate with Zhuge for the time being. Cao Cao is defeated at the Battle of Red Cliffs by the allied forces of Sun Quan and Liu Bei and he is forced to retreat north.

Chapter 45

At The Three Gorges, Cao Cao Loses Soldiers;
In The Gathering Of Heroes, Jiang Gan Is Trapped.

Zhou Yu was very annoyed by the words of Zhuge Jin, and a fierce hatred for Zhuge Liang took root in his heart. He nourished a secret resolve to make away with Zhuge Liang. He continued his preparations for war, and when the troops were all mustered and ready, he went in for a farewell interview with his lord. "You go on first, Noble Sir," said Sun Quan. "I will then march to support you." Zhou Yu took his leave and then, with Cheng Pu and Lu Su, marched out with the army. He invited Zhuge Liang to accompany the expedition, and when Zhuge Liang cheerfully accepted, the four embarked in the same ship. They set sail, and the fleet made for Xiakou. About twenty miles from Three Gorges the fleet anchored near the shore, and Zhou Yu built a stockade on the bank near the middle of their line with the Western Hills as a support. Other camps were made near his. Zhuge Liang, however, took up his quarters in a small ship.

When the camp dispositions were complete, Zhou Yu sent to request Zhuge Liang to come and give him advice. Zhuge Liang came. After the salutations were ended, Zhou Yu said, "Cao Cao, though he had fewer troops than Yuan Shao, nevertheless overcame Yuan Shao because he followed the advice given by Xun You to destroy Yuan Shao's supplies at Wuchao. Now Cao Cao has over eight hundred thousand troops while I have but fifty or sixty thousand. In order to defeat him, his supplies must be destroyed first. I have found out that the main depot is at the Iron Pile Mountains. As you have lived hereabout, you know the topography quite well, and I wish to entrust the task of cutting off supplies to you and your colleagues Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun. I will assist you with a thousand soldiers. I wish you to start without delay. In this way we can best serve our masters." Zhuge Liang saw through this at once. He thought to himself, "This is a ruse in revenge for my not having been persuaded to enter the service of the South Land. If I refuse, I shall be laughed at. So I will do as he asks and trust to find some means of deliverance from the evil he intends." Therefore Zhuge Liang accepted the task with alacrity, much to the joy of Zhou Yu.

After the leader of the expedition had taken his leave, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu secretly and said, "Why have you set him this task?" "Because I wish to compass his death without appearing ridiculous. I hope to get him killed by the hand of Cao Cao and prevent his doing further mischief." Lu Su left and went to see Zhuge Liang to find out if he suspected anything. Lu Su found him looking quite unconcerned and getting the soldiers ready to march. Unable to let Zhuge Liang go without a warning, however, Lu Su put a tentative question, "Do you think this expedition will succeed?" Zhuge Liang laughingly replied, "I am an adept at all sorts of fighting, with foot, horse, and chariots on land and marines on the water. There is no doubt of my success. I am not like you and your friend, only capable in one direction." "What do you mean by our being capable only in one direction?" said Lu Su. "I have heard the street children in your country singing: "To lay an ambush, hold a pass, Lu Su is the man to choose; But when you on the water fight, Zhou Yu is the man to use. "You are only fit for ambushes and guarding passes on land, just as Zhou Yu only understands fighting on the water," said Zhuge Liang. Lu Su carried this story to Zhou Yu, which only incensed him the more against Zhuge Liang.

"How dare he flout me, saying I cannot fight a land battle? I will not let him go. I will go myself with ten thousand troops and cut off Cao Cao's supplies." Lu Su went back and told this to Zhuge Liang, who smiled and said, "Zhou Yu only wanted me to go on this expedition because he wanted Cao Cao to kill me. And so I teased him a little. But he cannot bear that. Now is the critical moment, and Marquis Sun Quan and my master must act in harmony if we are to succeed. If each one tries to harm the other, the whole scheme will fail. Cao Cao is no fool, and it is he who usually attack enemies through cutting off their supplies. Do you not think Cao Cao has already taken double precautions against any surprise of his own depot? If Zhou Yu tries, he will be taken prisoner. What he ought to do is to bring about a decisive naval battle, whereby to dishearten the northern soldiers, and then find some other means to defeat them utterly. If you could persuade him what his best course was, it would be goodl."

Without loss of time, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu to relate what Zhuge Liang had told him. Zhou Yu shook his head when he heard it and beat the ground with his foot, saying, "This man is far too clever. He beats me ten to one. He will have to be done away with, or the South Land will suffer." Said Lu Su, "This is the moment to use people. You must think of the country's good first of all. When once Cao Cao is defeated, you may do as you please." Zhou Yu had to confess the reasonableness of this.

Liu Bei had ordered his nephew Liu Qi to hold Jiangxia, while he and the bulk of the army returned to Xiakou. Thence he saw the opposite bank thick with banners and flags and glittering with every kind of arms and armors. He knew then that the expedition from the South Land had started. So he moved all his force from Jiangxia to Fankou. Then he assembled his officers and said to them, "Zhuge Liang went to Wu some time ago, and no word has come from him, so I know not how the business stands. Will anyone volunteer to go to find out?" "I will go," said Mi Zhu. So presents were prepared and gifts of flesh and wine, and Mi Zhu prepared to journey to the South Land on the pretext of offering a congratulatory feast to the army.

He set out in a small ship and went down river. He stopped opposite the camp, and the soldiers reported his arrival to Zhou Yu, who ordered him to be brought in. Mi Zhu bowed low and expressed the respect which Liu Bei had for Zhou Yu and offered the various gifts. The ceremony of reception was followed by a banquet in honor of the guest. Mi Zhu said, "Zhuge Liang has been here a long time, and I desire that he may return with me." "Zhuge Liang is making plans with me, and I could not let him return," said Zhou Yu. "I also wish to see Liu Bei that we may make joint plans. But when one is at the head of a great army, one cannot get away even for a moment. If your master would only come here, it would be very gracious on his part." Mi Zhu agreed that Liu Bei might come and presently took his leave.

Then Lu Su asked Zhou Yu, "What is your reason for desiring Liu Bei to come?" "Liu Bei is the one bold and dangerous man and must be removed. I am taking this opportunity to persuade him to come. When he shall be slain, a great danger will cease to threaten our interests." Lu Su tried to dissuade him from this scheme, but Zhou Yu was deaf to all Lu Su said. Zhou Yu even issued orders: "Arrange half a hundred executioners to be ready to hide within the lining of the tent if Liu Bei decides to come; and when I drop a cup, that will be a signal for them to fall on and slay him."

Mi Zhu returned and told Liu Bei that his presence was desired by Zhou Yu. Suspecting nothing, Liu Bei at once ordered them to prepare a fast vessel to take him without loss of time. Guan Yu was opposed to his going, saying, "Zhou Yu is artful and treacherous, and there is no news from Zhuge Liang. Pray think more carefully." Liu Bei replied, "I have joined my forces to theirs in this attack on our common enemy. If Zhou Yu wishes to see me and I refuse to go, it is a betrayal. Nothing will succeed if both sides nourish suspicions." "If you have finally decided to go, then will I go with you," said Guan Yu. "And I also," cried Zhang Fei. But Liu Bei said, "Let Guan Yu come with me while you and Zhao Yun keep guard. Jian Yong will hold Exian. I shall not be away long."

So leaving these orders, Liu Bei embarked with Guan Yu on a small boat. The escort did not exceed twenty. The light craft traveled very quickly down the river. Liu Bei rejoiced greatly at the sight of the war vessels in tiers by the bank, the soldiers in their breastplates, and all the pomp and panoply of war. All was in excellent order. As soon as he arrived, the guards ran to tell Zhou Yu. "How many ships has he?" asked Zhou Yu. They replied, "Only one; and the escort is only about a score." "His fate is sealed," said Zhou Yu. Zhou Yu sent for the executioners and placed them in hiding between the outer and inner tents, and when all was arranged for the assassination he contemplated, he went out to receive his visitor. Liu Bei came with his

brother and escort into the midst of the army to the Commander's tent. After the salutations, Zhou Yu wished Liu Bei to take the upper seat, but he declined saying, "General, you are famous throughout all the empire, while I am a nobody. Do not overwhelm me with too great deference." So they took the positions of simple friends, and refreshments were brought in.

Now by chance Zhuge Liang came on shore and heard that his master had arrived and was with the Commander-in-Chief. The news gave Zhuge Liang a great shock, and he said to himself, "What is to be done now?" He made his way to the reception tent and stole a look therein. He saw murder written on Zhou Yu's countenance and noted the assassins hidden within the walls of the tent. Then he got a look at Liu Bei, who was laughing and talking quite unconcernedly. But when he noticed the redoubtable figure of Guan Yu near his master's side, he became quite calm and contented. "My lord faces no danger," said Zhuge Liang, and he went away to the river bank to await the end of the interview.

Meanwhile the banquet of welcome proceeded. After the wine had gone around several times, Zhou Yu picked up a cup to give the signal agreed upon. But at that moment Zhou Yu saw so fierce a look upon the face of the trusty henchman who stood, sword in hand, behind his guest, that Zhou Yu hesitated and hastily asked who he was. "That is my brother, Guan Yu," replied Liu Bei. Zhou Yu, quite startled, said, "Is he the slayer of Yan Liang and Wen Chou?" "Exactly; he it is," replied Liu Bei. The sweat of fear broke out all over Zhou Yu's body and trickled down his back. Then he poured out a cup of wine and presented it to Guan Yu. Just then Lu Su came in, and Liu Bei said to him, "Where is Zhuge Liang? I would trouble you to ask him to come." "Wait till we have defeated Cao Cao," said Zhou Yu, "then you shall see him." Liu Bei dared not repeat his request, but Guan Yu gave him a meaningful look which Liu Bei understood and rose, saying, "I would take leave now. I will come again to congratulate you when the enemy has been defeated and your success shall be complete." Zhou Yu did not press him to remain, but escorted him to the great gates of the camp, and Liu Bei left.

When he reached the river bank, they found Zhuge Liang awaiting them in their boat. Liu Bei was exceedingly pleased, but Zhuge Liang said, "Sir, do you know in how great danger you were today?" Suddenly sobered, Liu Bei said, "No; I did not think of danger." "If Guan Yu had not been there, you would have been killed," said Zhuge Liang. Liu Bei, after a moment's reflection, saw that it was true. He begged Zhuge Liang to return with him to Fankou, but Zhuge Liang refused. "I am quite safe," said Zhuge Liang. "Although I am living in the tiger's mouth, I am as steady as the Taishan Mountains. Now, my lord, return and prepare your ships and soldiers. On the twentieth day of the eleventh month, send Zhao Yun with a small ship to the south bank to wait for me. Be sure there is no miscarriage." "What are your intentions?" said Liu Bei. "When the southeast wind begins, I shall return." Liu Bei would have questioned him further, but Zhuge Liang pressed him to go. So the boat started up river again, while Zhuge Liang returned to his temporary lodging.

The boat had not proceeded far when appeared a small fleet of fifty ships sweeping down with the current, and in the prow of the leading vessel stood a tall figure armed with a spear. Guan Yu was ready to fight. But when they were near, they recognized that was Zhang Fei, who had come down fearing lest his brother might be in some difficulty from which the strong arm of Guan Yu might even be insufficient to rescue him. The three brothers thus returned together.

After Zhou Yu, having escorted Liu Bei to the gate of his camp, had returned to his quarters, Lu Su soon came to see him. "Then you had cajoled Liu Bei into coming, why did you not carry out your plan?" asked Lu Su. "Because of that Guan Yu. He is a very tiger, and he never left his brother for a moment. If anything had been attempted, he would certainly have had my life." Lu Su knew that Zhou Yu spoke the truth.

Then suddenly they announced a messenger with a letter from Cao Cao. Zhou Yu ordered them to bring him in and took the letter. But when he saw the superscription The First Minister of Han to Commander-in-Chief Zhou Yu, he fell into a frenzy of rage, tore the letter to fragments, and threw them on the ground. "To death with this fellow!" cried he. "When two countries are at war, their emissaries are not slain," said Lu Su. "Messengers are slain to show one's dignity and independence," replied Zhou Yu. The unhappy bearer of the letter was decapitated, and his head sent back to Cao Cao by the hands of his escort. Zhou Yu then decided to move. The van under Gan Ning was to advance, supported by two wings led by

Han Dang and Jiang Qin. Zhou Yu would lead the center body in support. The next morning the early meal was eaten in the fourth watch, and the ships got under weigh in the fifth with a great beating of drums.

Cao Cao was greatly angered when he heard that his letter had been torn to fragments, and he resolved to attack forthwith. His advance was led by the Supreme Admiral Cai Mao, the Vice-Admiral Zhang Yun, and others of the Jingzhou officers who had joined his side. Cao Cao went as hastily as possible to the meeting of the three rivers and saw the ships of the South Land sailing up. In the bow of the foremost ship from the south stood a fine figure of a warrior, who cried, "I am Gan Ning. I challenge anyone to combat!" Cai Mao sent his young brother, Cai Xun, to accept the challenge. But as Cai Xun's ship approached, Gan Ning shot an arrow and Cai Xun fell. Gan Ning pressed forward, his crossbowmen keeping up a heavy discharge which Cao Cao's troops could not stand. The wings of Han Dang from the left and Jiang Qin from the right also joined in. Cao Cao's soldiers, being mostly from the dry plains of the north, did not know how to fight effectually on water, and the southern ships had the battle all their own way. The slaughter was very great. However, after a contest lasting till afternoon, Zhou Yu thought it more prudent, in view of the superior numbers of his enemy, not to risk further the advantage he had gained. So he beat the gongs as the signal to cease battle and recall the ships.

Cao Cao was worsted, but his ships returned to the bank, where a camp was made and order was restored. Cao Cao sent for his defeated leaders and reproached them, saying, "You did not do your best. You let an inferior force overcome you." Cai Mao defended himself, saying, "The Jingzhou marines have not been exercised for a long time, and the others have never been trained for naval warfare at all. A naval camp must be instituted, the northern soldiers trained, and the Jingzhou force drilled. When they have been made efficient, they will win victories." "You are the Supreme Admiral. If you know what should be done, why have you not done it?" said Cao Cao. "What is the use of telling me this?"

So Cai Mao and Zhang Yun organized a naval camp on the river bank. They established twenty-four "Water Gates," with the large ships outside as a sort of rampart, and under their protection the smaller ships went to and fro freely. At night when the lanterns and torches were lit, the very sky was illuminated, and the water shone red with the glare. On land the smoke of the camp fires could be traced for one hundred mile without a break.

Zhou Yu returned to camp and feasted his victorious fighting force. A messenger bore the joyful tidings of victory to his master Sun Quan. When night fell, Zhou Yu went up to the summit of one of the hills and looked out over the long line of bright lights stretching toward the west, showing the extent of the enemy's camp. He said nothing, but a great fear came in upon him. Next day Zhou Yu decided that he would go in person to find out the strength of the enemy. So he bade them prepare a small squadron which he manned with strong, hardy men armed with powerful bows and stiff crossbows. He also placed musicians on each ship.

They set sail and started up the stream. When they got opposite Cao Cao's camp, the heavy stones that served as anchors were dropped, and the music was played while Zhou Yu scanned the enemy's naval camp. What he saw gave him no satisfaction, for everything was most admirable. He said, "How well and correctly built is that naval base! Anyone knows the names of those in command?" "They are Cai Mao and Zhang Yun," said his officers. "They have lived in the south a long time," said Zhou Yu, "and are thoroughly experienced in naval warfare. I must find some means of removing them before I can effect anything." Meanwhile on shore the sentinels had told Cao Cao that the enemy craft were spying upon them, and Cao Cao ordered out some ships to capture the spies. Zhou Yu saw the commotion of the commanding flags on shore and hastily gave the order to unmoor and sail down stream. The squadron at once got under way and scattered; to and fro went the oars, and each ship seemed to fly. Before Cao Cao's ships could get out after them, they were all far away. Cao Cao's ships took up the chase but soon saw pursuit was useless. They returned and reported their failure.

Again Cao Cao found fault with his officers and said, "The other day you lost a battle, and the soldiers were greatly dispirited. Now the enemy have spied out our camp. What can be done?" In eager response to his question one stepped out, saying, "When I was a youth, Zhou Yu and I were fellow students and pledged friends. My three-inch tongue is still good, and I will go over and persuade him to surrender." Cao Cao,

rejoiced to find so speedy a solution, looked at the speaker. It was Jiang Gan of Jiujiang, one of the counseling staff in the camp. "Are you a good friend of Zhou Yu?" said Cao Cao. "Rest content, O Prime Minister," replied Jiang Gan. "If I only get on the other side of the river, I shall succeed." "What preparations are necessary?" asked Cao Cao. "Just a youth as my servant and a couple of rowers. Nothing else." Cao Cao offered him wine, wished him success, and sent him on his way. Clad in a simple white robe and seated in his little craft, the messenger reached Zhou Yu's camp and bade the guards say that an old friend Jiang Gan wished to see him. The commander was in his tent at a council when the message came, and he laughed as he said to those about him, "A persuader is coming." Then he whispered certain instructions in the ear of each one of them, and they went out to await his arrival.

Zhou Yu received his friend in full ceremonial garb. A crowd of officers in rich silken robes were about him. The guest appeared, his sole attendant a lad dressed in a simple blue gown. Jiang Gan bore himself proudly as he advanced, and Zhou Yu made a low obeisance. "You have been well I hope since last we met," said Jiang Gan. "You have wandered far and suffered much in this task of emissary in Cao Cao's cause," said Zhou Yu. "I have not seen you for a very long time," said the envoy much taken aback, "and I came to visit you for the sake of old times. Why do you call me an emissary for the Cao Cao's cause?" "Though I am not so profound a musician as Shi Kuang* of old, yet I can comprehend the thought behind the music," replied Zhou Yu. "As you choose to treat your old friend like this, I think I will take my leave," said Jiang Gan. Zhou Yu laughed again, and taking Jiang Gan by the arm, said, "Well, I feared you might be coming on his behalf to try to persuade me. But if this is not your intention, you need not go away so hastily." So they two entered the tent. When they had exchanged salutes and were seated as friends, Zhou Yu bade them call his officers that he might introduce them.

There soon appeared civil and military officials, all dressed in their best. The military officers were clad in glittering silver armor and the staff looked very imposing as they stood ranged in two lines. The visitor was introduced to them all. Presently a banquet was spread, and while they feasted, the musicians played songs of victory and the wine circulated merrily. Under the mellowing influence, Zhou Yu's reserve seemed to thaw and he said, "Jiang Gan is an old fellow student of mine, and we are pledged friends. Though he has arrived here from the north, he is no artful pleader so you need not be afraid of him." Then Zhou Yu took off the commanding sword which he wore as Commander-in-Chief and handed it to Taishi Ci, saying, "You take this and wear it for the day as master of the feast. This day we meet only as friends and speak only of friendship, and if anyone shall begin a discussion of the questions at issue between Cao Cao and the South Land, just slay him." Taishi Ci took the sword and seated himself in his place. Jiang Gan was not a little overcome, but he said no word.

Zhou Yu said, "Since I assumed command, I have tasted no drop of wine; but today as an old friend is present and there is no reason to fear him, I am going to drink freely." So saying he quaffed a huge goblet and laughed loudly. The rhinoceros cups went swiftly round from guest to guest till all were half drunk. Then Zhou Yu, laying hold of the guest's hand, led him outside the tent. The guards who stood around all braced themselves up and seized their shining weapons. "Do you not think my soldiers a fine lot of fellows?" said Zhou Yu. "Strong as bears and bold as tigers," replied Jiang Gan. Then Zhou Yu led him to the rear of the tent whence he saw the grain and forage piled up in mountainous heaps. "Do you not think I have a fairly good store of grain and forage?" "Your troops are brave and your supplies ample: The empire's gossip is not baseless, indeed."

Zhou Yu pretended to be quite intoxicated and went on, "When you and I were students together, we never looked forward to a day like this, did we?" "For a genius like you, it is nothing extraordinary," said the guest. Zhou Yu again seized his hand, and they sat down. "A man of the time, I have found a proper lord to serve. In his service, we rely upon the right feeling between minister and prince outside, and at home we are firm in the kindly feeling of relatives. He listens to my words and follows my plans. We share the same good or evil fortune. Even when the great old persuaders like Su Qin, Zhang Yi, Lu Jia, and Li Yiji lived again, even when their words poured forth like a rushing river, their tongues were as a sharp sword, it is impossible to move such as I am!" Zhou Yu burst into a loud laugh as he finished, and Jiang Gan's face had become clay-colored. Zhou Yu then led his guest back into the tent, and again they fell to drinking. Presently Zhou Yu pointed to the others at table and said, "These are all the best and bravest of the land of the south. One

might call this the 'Gathering of Heroes.'" They drank on till daylight failed and continued after lamps had been lit. Zhou Yu even gave an exhibition of sword play.

By this time it was getting late, and the guest begged to be excused. "The wine is too much for me," said Jiang Gan. His host bade them clear the table. As all the others left, Zhou Yu said, "It has been many a day since I shared a couch with my friend, but we will do so tonight." Putting on the appearance of irresponsible intoxication, he led Jiang Gan into the tent and they went to bed. Zhou Yu simply fell, all dressed as he was, and lay there emitting uncouth grunts and groans, so that to the guest sleep was impossible. Jiang Gan lay and listened to the various camp noises without and his host's thunderous snores within. About the second watch he rose and looked at his friend by the dim light of the small lamp. He also saw on the table a heap of papers, and coming out and looking at them furtively, he saw they were letters. Among them he saw one marked as coming from Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, Cao Cao's Supreme Admiral and Vice-Admiral. He read it and this is what it said:

"We surrendered to Cao Cao, not for the sake of pay but under stress of circumstances. Now we have been able to hold these northern soldiers into this naval camp but, as soon as occasion offers, we mean to have the rebel's head to offer as a sacrifice to your banner. From time to time there will be reports as occasions serve, but you may trust us. This is our humble reply to your letter."

"Those two were connected with the South Land in the beginning," thought Jiang Gan, so he secreted the letter in his dress and began to examine the others. But at that moment Zhou Yu turned over, and so Jiang Gan hastily blew out the light and went to his couch. Zhou Yu was muttering as he lay there as if dreaming, saying, "Friend, I am going to let you see Cao Cao's head in a day or two." Jiang Gan hastily made some reply to load on his host to say more. Then came, "Wait a few days; you will see Cao Cao's head. The old wretch!" Jiang Gan tried to question him as to what he meant, but Zhou Yu was fast asleep and seemed to hear nothing.

Jiang Gan lay there on his couch wide awake till the fourth watch was beating. Then someone came in, saying, "General, are you awake?" At that moment as if suddenly awakened from the deepest slumber, Zhou Yu started up and said, "Who is this on the couch?" The voice replied, "Do you not remember, General? You asked your old friend to stay the night with you. It is he, of course." "I drank too much last night," said Zhou Yu in a regretful tone, "and I forgot. I seldom indulge to excess and am not used to it. Perhaps I said many things I ought not." The voice went on, "A man has arrived from the north." "Speak lower," said Zhou Yu, and turning toward the sleeper, he called him by name. But Jiang Gan affected to be sound asleep and made no sign. Zhou Yu crept out of the tent, while Jiang Gan listened with all his ears. He heard the man say, "Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, the two commanders, have come." But listening as he did with straining ears, he could not make out what followed.

Soon after Zhou Yu reentered and again called out his companion's name. But no reply came, for Jiang Gan was pretending to be in the deepest slumber and to hear nothing. Then Zhou Yu undressed and went to bed. As Jiang Gan lay awake, he remembered that Zhou Yu was known to be meticulously careful in affairs, and if in the morning Zhou Yu found that a letter had disappeared, he would certainly slay the offender. So Jiang Gan lay there till near daylight and then called out to his host. Getting no reply, he rose, dressed, and stole out of the tent. Then he called his servant and made for the camp gate. "Whither are you going, Sir?" said the watchmen at the gate. "I fear I am in the way here," replied Jiang Gan, "and so I have taken leave of the Commander-in-Chief for a time. So do not stop me."

He found his way to the river bank and reembarked. Then, with flying oars, he hastened back to Cao Cao's camp. When he arrived, Cao Cao asked at once how he had sped, and he had to acknowledge failure. "Zhou Yu is very clever and perfectly high-minded," said Jiang Gan. "Nothing that I could say moved him in the least." "Your failure makes me look ridiculous," said Cao Cao. "Well, if I did not win over Zhou Yu, I found out something for you. Send away these people, and I will tell you," said Jiang Gan. The servants were dismissed, and then Jiang Gan produced the letter he had stolen from Zhou Yu's tent. He gave it to Cao Cao. Cao Cao was very angry and sent for Cai Mao and Zhang Yun at once. As soon as they appeared, he said, "I want you two to attack." Cai Mao replied, "But the soldiers are not yet sufficiently trained." "The soldiers will be well enough trained when you have sent my head to Zhou Yu, eh?" Both commanders were dumb-

founded, having not the least idea what this meant. They remained silent for they had nothing to say. Cao Cao bade the executioners lead them away to instant death. In a short time their heads were produced. By this time Cao Cao had thought over the matter, and it dawned upon him that he had been tricked.

The death of these two naval commanders caused much consternation in the camp, and all their colleagues asked the reason for their sudden execution. Though Cao Cao knew they had been victimized, he would not acknowledge it. So he said, "These two had been remiss, and so had been put to death." The others were aghast, but nothing could be done. Two other officers, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, were put in command of the naval camp.

Spies took the news to Zhou Yu, who was delighted at the success of his ruse. "Those two Cai Mao and Zhang Yun were my only source of anxiety," said he. "Now they are gone: I am quite happy." Lu Su said, "General, if you can continue like this, you need not fear Cao Cao." "I do not think any of them saw my game," said Zhou Yu, "except Zhuge Liang. He beats me, and I do not think this ruse was hidden from him. You go and sound him. See if he knew."

Chapter 46

Using Strategy, Zhuge Liang Borrows Arrows;
Joining A Ruse, Huang Gai Accepts Punishment.

Lu Su departed on his mission and found Zhuge Liang seated in his little craft. "There has been so much to do that I have not been able to come to listen to your instructions," said Lu Su. "That is truly so," said Zhuge Liang, "and I have not yet congratulated the Commander-in-Chief." "What have you wished to congratulate him upon?" "Why Sir, the matter upon which he sent you to find out whether I knew about it or not. Indeed I can congratulate him on that." Lu Su turned pale and gasped, saying, "But how did you know, Master?" "The ruse succeeded well thus played off on Jiang Gan. Cao Cao has been taken in this once, but he will soon rise to it. Only he will not confess his mistake. However, the two men are gone, and the South Land is freed from a grave anxiety. Do you not think that is a matter for congratulation? I hear Mao Jie and Yu Jin are the new admirals, and in their hands lie both good and evil for the fate of the northern fleet."

Lu Su was quite dumbfounded. He stayed a little time longer passing the time in making empty remarks, and then took his leave. As he was going away, Zhuge Liang cautioned him, saying, "Do not let Zhou Yu know that I know his ruse. If you let him know, he will seek some chance to do me harm." Lu Su promised. Nevertheless he went straight to his chief and related the whole thing just as it happened. "Really he must be got rid of," said Zhou Yu. "I have quite decided to put the man out of the way." "If you slay him, will not Cao Cao laugh at you?" "Oh, no; I will find a legitimate way of getting rid of him so that he shall go to his death without resentment." "But how can you find a legitimate way of assassinating him?" "Do not ask too much. You will see presently."

Soon after all the officers were summoned to the main tent, and Zhuge Liang's presence was desired. He went contentedly enough. When all were seated, Zhou Yu suddenly addressed Zhuge Liang, saying, "I am going to fight a battle with the enemy soon on the water. What weapons are the best?" "On a great river arrows are the best," said Zhuge Liang. "Your opinion and mine agree. But at the moment we are short of them. I wish you would undertake to supply about a hundred thousand arrows for the naval fight. As it is for the public service, you will not decline, I hope." "Whatever task the Commander-in-Chief lays upon me, I must certainly try to perform," replied Zhuge Liang. "May I inquire by what date you require the hundred thousand arrows?" "Could you have them ready in ten days?" "The enemy will be here very soon. Ten days will be too late," said Zhuge Liang. "In how many days do you estimate the arrows can be ready?" "Let me have three days. Then you may send for your hundred thousand." "No joking, remember!" said Zhou Yu. "There is no joking in war time." "Dare I joke with the Commander-in-Chief? Give me a formal military order. If I have not completed the task in three days, I will take my punishment."

Zhou Yu, secretly delighted, sent for the secretaries and prepared the commission then and there. Then he drank to the success of the undertaking and said, "I shall have to congratulate you most heartily when this is accomplished." "This day is too late to count," said Zhuge Liang. "On the third from tomorrow morning send five hundred small boats to the river side to convey the arrows." They drank a few more cups together, and then Zhuge Liang took his leave. After he had gone, Lu Su said, "Do you not think there is

some deceit about this?" "Clearly it is not I! It is he who has signed his own death warrant," said Zhou Yu. "Without being pressed in the least, he asked for a formal order in the face of the whole assembly. Even if he grew a pair of wings, he could not escape. Only I will just order the workers to delay him as much as they can, and not supply him with materials, so that he is sure to fail. And then, when the certain penalty is incurred, who can criticize? You can go and inquire about it all and keep me informed."

So off went Lu Su to seek Zhuge Liang, who at once reproached him with having blabbed about the former business. Zhuge Liang said, "He wants to hurt me, as you know, and I did not think you could not keep my secret. And now there is what you saw today, and how do you think I can get a hundred thousand arrows made in three days? You will simply have to rescue me." "You brought the misfortune on yourself, and how can I rescue you?" said Lu Su. "I look to you for the loan of twenty vessels, manned each by thirty people. I want blue cotton screens and bundles of straw lashed to the sides of the boats. I have good use for them. On the third day, I shall undertake to deliver the fixed number of arrows. But on no account must you let Zhou Yu know, or my scheme will be wrecked." Lu Su consented, and this time he kept his word. He went to report to his chief as usual, but he said nothing about the boats. He only said, "Zhuge Liang is not using bamboo or feathers or glue or varnish, but has some other way of getting arrows." "Let us await the three days' limit," said Zhou Yu, puzzled though confident.

On his side Lu Su quietly prepared a score of light swift boats, each with its crew and the blue screens and bundles of grass complete and, when these were ready, he placed them at Zhuge Liang's disposal. Zhuge Liang did nothing on the first day, nor on the second. On the third day at the middle of the fourth watch, Zhuge Liang sent a private message asking Lu Su to come to his boat. "Why have you sent for me, Sir?" asked Lu Su. "I want you to go with me to get those arrows." "Whither are you going?" "Do not ask. You will see." Then the twenty boats were fastened together by long ropes and moved over to the north bank.

The night proved very foggy and the mist was very dense along the river, so that one person could scarcely see another. In spite of the fog, Zhuge Liang urged the boats forward as if into the vast fairy kingdom. The little fleet reached Cao Cao's naval camp about the fifth watch, and Zhuge Liang gave orders to form line lying prows west, and then to beat the drums and shout. "But what shall we do if they attack us?" exclaimed Lu Su. Zhuge Liang replied with a smile, "I think their fleet will not venture out in this fog. Go on with your wine, and let us be happy. We will go back when the fog lifts."

As soon as the shouting from the river was heard by those in the camp, the two admirals, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, ran off to report to Cao Cao, who said, "Coming up in a fog like this means that they have prepared an ambush for us. Do not go out, but get all the force together and shoot at them." He also sent orders to the ground camps to dispatch six thousand of archers and crossbowmen to aid the marines. The naval forces were then lined up shooting on the bank to prevent a landing. Presently the soldiers arrived, and ten thousand and more soldiers were shooting down into the river, where the arrows fell like rain.

By and bye Zhuge Liang ordered the boats to turn round so that their prows pointed east and to go closer in so that many arrows might hit them. Zhuge Liang ordered the drums to be kept beating till the sun was high and the fog began to disperse, when the boats got under way and sailed down stream. The whole twenty boats were bristling with arrows on both sides. As they left, Zhuge Liang asked all the crews to shout derisively, "We thank you, Sir Prime Minister, for the arrows!" They told Cao Cao, but by the time he came, the light boats helped by the swift current were seven miles long down the river and pursuit was impossible. Cao Cao saw that he had been duped and was very sorry, but there was no help for it.

On the way down Zhuge Liang said to his companion, "Every boat must have five or six thousand arrows and so, without the expenditure of an ounce of energy, we must have more than ten myriad arrows, which tomorrow can be shot back again at Cao Cao's army to his great inconvenience." "You are really superhuman," said Lu Su. "But how did you know there would be a thick fog today?" "One cannot be a leader without knowing the workings of heaven and the ways of earth. One must understand the secret gates and the interdependence of the elements, the mysteries of tactics and the value of forces. It is but an ordinary talent. I calculated three days ago that there would be a fog today, and so I set the limit at three days. Zhou Yu would give me ten days, but neither artificers nor materials, so that he might find occasion to put me to death as I knew. But my fate lies with the Supreme, and how could Zhou Yu harm me?" Lu Su could not but agree.

When the boats arrived, five hundred soldiers were in readiness on the bank to carry away the arrows. Zhuge Liang bade them go on board the boats, collect them and bear them to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. Lu Su went to report that the arrows had been obtained and told Zhou Yu by what means. Zhou Yu was amazed and sighed sadly, saying, "He is better than I. His methods are more than human." When, shortly after his return, Zhuge Liang went to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief, he was welcomed by Zhou Yu, who came forward to greet him, saying, "Your superhuman predictions compel one's esteem." "There is nothing remarkable in that trifling trick," replied he. Zhou Yu led him within and wine was brought.