

Welcome to the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast. This is episode 19.

Before we get back into the story, I have a couple quick notes. First, I noticed a sizable uptick in the website traffic the last few days due to an influx of visitors from the Something Awful Forums. So, welcome to all of you who discovered this show from there, and thank you for checking it out. Also, thanks to user Groucho Marxist for posting a link to the podcast on those forums.

Second, I want to direct your attention to a new feature on the website: an interactive timeline of the events in the novel so far. The timeline will be updated as the podcast progresses. So go check it out at [3kingdomspodcast.com](http://3kingdomspodcast.com), spelled with the number 3.

Last time, we left off with Cao Cao having just risen to the top of the political food chain. He had rescued the emperor from the traitors Li Jue and Guo Si, moved the court to Xuchang (3,1), was named regent-general and given all the important powers of government, and placed his own people in all the key positions. This ascension to power called for a celebration, so Cao Cao held a feast in his private quarters, where he gathered his strategists to not only celebrate but also talk business. And his first order of business was to settle some old scores.

“Liu Bei has stationed his troops in Xu Province and taken over control of the province,” Cao Cao said. “And recently Lu Bu went to join him after being defeated by me, and Liu Bei stationed him at Xiaopei (3,4). If these two work together and stir up trouble, they will be a thorn in our side. Does anyone have any ideas for eliminating them?”

One of his generals, Xu (2) Chu (3), had an idea.

“Your excellency, if you would lend me 50,000 troops, I will bring you the heads of Liu Bei and Lu Bu!” he said.

Umm, ok. We’ll put that one in the maybe column. Does anyone else have an idea?

“General Xu, you are certainly brave, but you do not understand strategy,” said Xun (2) Yu (4), Cao

Cao's chief adviser. "It is best to avoid an armed conflict so soon after we moved the court to Xuchang. I have a plan, called "Two Tigers Fighting for Food."

"Liu Bei may be overseeing Xu Province, but he hasn't been officially recognized. Your excellency could petition the emperor to officially appoint him the imperial protector of Xu Province, and then send him a secret message instructing him to kill Lu Bu. If Liu Bei succeeds, then he will be left without a fearsome warrior to help him. If he fails, then Lu Bu would certainly kill him."

Cao Cao agreed with Xun Yu and petitioned the emperor to send a decree to Xu Province, bestowing a generalship on Liu Bei, giving him a fief in Yicheng (4,2), and naming him the imperial protector of Xu Province. Along with the decree, the messenger also carried a secret letter.

Meanwhile in Xu Province, Liu Bei had heard that the emperor had moved to Xuchang and was just about to send a memorial to congratulate his majesty when he got word that a messenger from the emperor had arrived. So Liu Bei went out of the city to welcome the messenger, prostrated on the ground to receive the imperial decree, and then treated the messenger to a banquet.

During the banquet, the messenger told Liu Bei, "This gift from the emperor was all thanks to General Cao's recommendation," and Liu Bei told the messenger to convey his thanks to Cao Cao as well. The messenger then gave Liu Bei the secret letter he had been carrying.

Upon reading it, Liu Bei said, "Let me think about how to proceed."

After the banquet, Liu Bei arranged guest quarters for the messenger and then assembled his confidants to discuss the instructions in the letter. To Zhang Fei, it was a fairly simple matter.

"Lu Bu is a dishonorable dog," he said. "So what's the problem with killing him?"

"He was down on his luck and came to seek refuge with me," Liu Bei said. "If I kill him, that would be dishonorable as well."

“You can’t please everyone!” Zhang Fei said, but Liu Bei would not go along with it.

The next day, Lu Bu came to visit.

“Sir, I’ve heard that you have received an imperial appointment, so I have come to congratulate you,” Lu Bu said to Liu Bei as he entered.

Before Liu Bei had even finished saying thanks, Zhang Fei was stomping into the hall with sword in hand, ready to kill Lu Bu. Liu Bei immediately stopped him, but Lu Bu was understandably taken aback.

“Why are you always trying to kill me?” he asked Zhang Fei.

“Cao Cao said you are a dishonorable man and instructed my brother to kill you,” Zhang Fei answered.

Liu Bei immediately scolded Zhang Fei and sent him away. He then led Lu Bu into his private quarters and told him everything and showed him the letter from Cao Cao. After reading the letter, Lu Bu wept and said, “That scoundrel Cao Cao is trying to turn us against each other!”

“Don’t worry, brother. I swear that I will never do such a dishonorable thing,” Liu Bei assured him.

Lu Bu thanked Liu Bei time and again, and then they feasted until nightfall, at which point Lu Bu went back to Xiaopei (3,4). Once he left, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei came to ask Liu Bei why he didn’t kill Lu Bu.

“Cao Cao is concerned that Lu Bu and I would work together and declare war on him,” Liu Bei said. “That’s why he used this scheme to try to make us turn on each other while he takes advantage. Why should we be his pawns?”

Guan Yu nodded in agreement with this assessment, but Zhang Fei was still not convinced it was the right decision.

“I still want to kill that bastard to eliminate any future trouble,” he said.

“That is not the action of a real man,” Liu Bei replied.

The next day, the messenger set off on the return trip to the capital. Liu Bei saw him off, thanked him

again, and gave him a letter to take back to Cao Cao. The letter just said that Liu Bei needed more time to do Cao Cao requested, so don't call us, we'll call you. When the messenger returned to Xuchang and told Cao Cao that Liu Bei did not kill Lu Bu, Cao Cao asked Xun Yu if he had any other brilliant ideas, and it turns out he did,

"It's called 'Driving the Tiger to Swallow the Wolf,' " Xun Yu said.

You know, I just can't help but wonder how much time these guys spend sitting around coming up with clever names for their plans. But in any case, Xun Yu explained this scheme to Cao Cao.

"Send a secret message to Yuan Shu and tell him that Liu Bei has sent a secret memorial to the court requesting permission to take over Yuan Shu's district, Nanjun (2,4). Yuan Shu would no doubt be enraged by this and attack Liu Bei. At the same time, your excellency should publicly order Liu Bei to mount an expedition against Yuan Shu. When the two sides collide, it will be too tempting for Lu Bu to not try something."

This fiendishly clever plan delighted Cao Cao, and he sent a message to Yuan Shu and dispatched a decree in the name of the emperor to Xu Province.

The imperial decree arrived in Xu Province, ordering Liu Bei to attack Yuan Shu. Liu Bei accepted the order and sent the messenger back to the capital.

"This must be yet another trick from Cao Cao," said Mi (2) Zhu (2), one of Liu Bei's advisers.

"That may be, but we still cannot disobey an order from the emperor," Liu Bei said.

So Liu Bei organized his troops and prepared to set out on an expedition against Yuan Shu, but before he went, he had to decide which of his two brothers to leave in charge of the province. Guan Yu volunteered, but Liu Bei said, "I will need your consult day and night. I cannot leave you behind."

Well, that left only one other brother, and Zhang Fei also volunteered to stay and hold down the fort, but Liu Bei had reservations about this as well.

“You cannot defend this city,” Liu Bei said. “First of all, whenever you drink you lose all good sense and start whipping soldiers. Secondly, you never take things seriously and always ignore other people’s advice. I cannot trust you.”

“Well then, from now on, I will give up wine, stop beating soldiers, and listen to everyone’s advice,” Zhang Fei said.

I’m sure everyone present was thinking, umm, ok, whatever you say, Zhang Fei. Mi (2) Zhu (2) tried to phrase that somewhat nicely.

“You might not be able to live up to that promise,” he said.

This riled up Zhang Fei.

“In all the years that I have been following my brother, I have never broken my word! How dare you underestimate me?!”

“Even though you have made this promise,” Liu Bei said, “I still feel uneasy. So I will have Chen (2) Deng (1) assist you. Limit your drinking so you don’t screw up.”

Chen (2) Deng (1), who was probably silently lamenting that he had drawn the short straw, accepted the charge, and once all the arrangements were in place, Liu Bei set out for Nanyang (2,2), Yuan Shu’s base of power, with 30.000 cavalry and infantry.

Meanwhile, Yuan Shu had gotten a message saying Liu Bei had told the court that he intended to swallow his territory, and he was not amused.

“You are but a lowly mat-weaver and sandal-maker,” Yuan Shu said. “You have the audacity to stake a claim on a large province and try to sit at the same table with the lords of the realm! I was just about to come wipe you out, and yet you dare to move against me first? How despicable!”

So Yuan Shu immediately ordered one of his top generals, Ji (4) Ling (2), to lead 100,000 men and march toward Xu Province. The two armies met up at Xüyi (1,2). Because he had the smaller force, Liu Bei

decided to set up camp by the water and hills. The two sides then lined up for combat. Ji (4) Ling (2), who wielded a heavy trident, rode out and cursed Liu Bei.

“Liu Bei, you country bumpkin! How dare you encroach on our territory?!”

“I have been ordered by the emperor to punish an insubordinate servant,” Liu Bei said. “Resistance is a crime that warrants a punishment worse than death.”

This angered Ji (4) Ling (2), and he rode toward Liu Bei. But Guan Yu shouted, “Don’t try to show off, you bastard!” and he rode out to meet Ji Ling. The two fought for about 30 bouts without a winner, and Ji Ling shouted for a brief respite. Now, calling a timeout in the middle of a life-and-death struggle seems kind of odd, but Guan Yu was pretty confident in his own skills, so he was like, fine, whatever, and rode back to his own lines to wait out the commercial break.

Ji Ling, however, went back to his own lines and sent out a backup, a lieutenant named Xun (2) Zheng (4), in his place.

“Go tell Ji Ling to come out himself and settle this with me,” Guan Yu said.

“[Scoff] You’re a no-name lackey. You’re no match for General Ji,” Xun (2) Zheng (4) retorted.

Well, now this guy was just asking for it. An irate Guan Yu galloped out and cut down Xun (2) Zheng (4) after just one bout. Liu Bei used the momentum to direct his army forward and routed Ji Ling. Ji Ling fell back to the mouth of the Huaiyin (2,1) River. He did not dare to come out and fight again and only sent his men to stage surprise attacks on Liu Bei’s camp, but Liu Bei’s army fought them off every time. So the two armies settled into a stalemate.

With Liu Bei bogged down on the front lines, let’s jump back to Xu Province and check in on Zhang Fei, since we obviously did not do all that foreshadowing about his drunken tendencies earlier for nothing. So ever since Liu Bei left, Zhang Fei left all the administrative matters to Chen (2) Deng (1), while he concerned himself only with military issues. One day, he invited all the officials to a feast. Once

everyone was seated, Zhang Fei addressed them.

“Before he left, my brother told me to cut down on drinking so as to avoid screwing things up. Today, everyone should drink our fill. Starting tomorrow, everyone must abstain from wine and help me defend the city. But today, we shall drink to our hearts’ content.”

Zhang Fei then got up and personally toasted each official. When he got to the officer Cao (2) Pao (4), Cao Pao (4) said, “I cannot drink. I have always abstained from wine.”

“What? What kind of warrior does not touch wine?” Zhang Fei said. “I insist that you drink one cup.”

Cao Pao was afraid of Zhang Fei’s temper, so he forced down a cup, and that appeased Zhang Fei. After he finished toasting all the officials, Zhang Fei switched to a giant goblet and chugged a few dozen goblets in a row. By now, he was wasted, but he got up to toast the officials again. When he came upon Cao Pao once more, Cao Pao said, “I really cannot drink another cup.”

“But you drank one earlier. Why do you refuse now?” Zhang Fei said.

When Cao Pao kept trying to decline, Zhang Fei got mad.

“You dare to disobey my order?! You shall receive receive 100 lashes!”

When Zhang Fei shouted for guards to seize Cao Pao, Chen Deng tried to intervene.

“Do you remember what Lord Liu said to you when he left?”

“Look, you’re a civil official. Just go take care of civil matters. Don’t get into my business!”

Cao Pao now begged Zhang Fei: “General, please spare me on account of my son-in-law.”

“Who’s your son-in-law?”

“Lu Bu.”

Well, that was probably the worst answer Cao Pao could have given if he was trying to spare himself a beating. Zhang Fei went from mad to madder.

“I wasn’t going to beat you, but then you tried to name-drop Lu Bu to scare me. So now I’m definitely going to beat you, because when I beat you, I would be beating Lu Bu!”

At this point, no attempt at intervention was going to hold Zhang Fei back, and he gave Cao Pao 50 lashes before he stopped at the behest of everyone present.

After the banquet, Cao Pao staggered home and, not surprisingly, seethed with hatred for Zhang Fei. So he sent a message to Lu Bu that night, telling him about Zhang Fei's outburst. The message also said, "Liu Bei has already left. Tonight, you can take advantage of Zhang Fei's drunkenness and attack Xu Province. Do not miss this opportunity."

When Lu Bu got this message, he consulted with his adviser, Chen Gong.

"Xiaopei (3,4) is not a place to stay long-term," Chen Gong said. "We cannot miss this opportunity to take Xu Province, or we would regret it."

Lu Bu agreed. So he donned his armor and set off with 500 cavalry men, while Chen Gong followed with the main army and the general Gao (1) Shun (4) led reinforcements in the rear.

Xiaopei wasn't that far from Xu Province, so it didn't take long for Lu Bu to get there. It was about 1 a.m. when he arrived. The moon was shining brightly, and the sentries keeping watch were unaware of what was going on. Lu Bu shouted from outside the city gate, "I come bearing vital information from Lord Liu."

On the city walls, Cao Pao's men reported this to him. Cao Pao took a look and immediately ordered the soldiers to open the gates. Lu Bu gave the signal, and his men stormed into the city with a loud roar. While this was happening, Zhang Fei was passed out in his home. His attendants hurriedly woke him and reported that Lu Bu had stormed the city. Zhang Fei flew into a rage and he quickly donned his armor and grabbed his spear.

No sooner had he gone outside and mounted his horse did Lu Bu and his men arrive. At this time, Zhang Fei was still nursing a hangover and was not his usual ferocious self. But Lu Bu also knew how fearsome Zhang Fei could be, so he didn't dare to press him either. That allowed Zhang Fei, flanked by



18 personal guards, to fight his way out of the city through the east gate. But in the midst of this, he didn't have time to take anything with him, including Liu Bei's family.

While Lu Bu was content to let Zhang Fei go, Cao Pao had a score to settle. Figuring that he might have an advantage because Zhang Fei was drunk, he led about 100 men and gave chase. When Zhang Fei saw Cao Pao, he bubbled over with rage and galloped toward him. And even hung-over, Zhang Fei was still 100 times the warrior that Cao Pao was. After just three bouts, Cao Pao turned and fled. Zhang Fei caught up to him by the riverbank, stabbed him through the heart from behind, and both Cao Pao and his horse fell into the river and died.

After letting off a little steam, Zhang Fei called to his soldiers from outside the city, and some of them fled out of the city and followed him as he went to find Liu Bei. Lu Bu, meanwhile, restored order to the city after the night raid. He also stationed a hundred men around Liu Bei's residence and ordered that no one is allowed to enter.

Zhang Fei, leading a few dozen riders, found Liu Bei in Xüyi (1,2) and told him what happened. Everyone present turned pale at the thought of their current quandary, but Liu Bei simply sighed and said, "Easy come, easy go."

"Where are our sisters-in-law?" Guan Yu asked.

"They are all still inside the city," Zhang Fei said.

Liu Bei said nothing upon hearing this, but Guan Yu stamped his foot and scolded Zhang Fei.

"Do you remember what you promised when you volunteered to defend the city? And what our brother told you? And now the city is lost and our sisters-in-law are trapped. What now?!"

Zhang Fei, in a moment of despair, pulled out his sword and put it to his own throat. But just as he was about to off himself, Liu Bei stepped forward and grabbed him, seized the sword, and threw it to the ground.

“There is an old saying,” Liu Bei told Zhang Fei. “ ‘Brothers are like limbs, while wives and children are mere garments. If a garment is torn, it can be mended. But who can mend a severed limb?’ The three of us swore an oath in the peach garden to die together. Even though I have lost my city and my wives, how can I bear to go on without my brother? Besides, the city was never really mine to begin with, and as for my family, I doubt Lu Bu would harm them, so we can still find a way to save them. You made one mistake. It is not worth throwing away your life for.”

After these words, Liu Bei began to weep bitterly, and Guan Yu and Zhang Fei were moved to tears.

But Liu Bei’s troubles were just beginning. When Yuan Shu got word that Lu Bu had seized Xu Province, he immediately sent a messenger to see Lu Bu, promising 50,000 bushels of grain, 500 horses, 10,000 ounces of gold and silver, and 1,000 bolts of silk, if Lu Bu would attack Liu Bei. Lu Bu, delighted by this offer, ordered Gao (1) Shun (4) to lead 50,000 men and attack Liu Bei’s rear. When Liu Bei got this news, he took advantage of bad weather to abandon Xüyi (1,2) and fled east toward Guangling (3,2).

By the time Gao Shun arrived, Liu Bei was long gone. Gao Shun met up with Yuan Shu’s general, Ji (4) Ling (2), and asked him for all the swag that his master had promised in exchange for Lu Bu attacking Liu Bei.

“Please return home for now. I will check with my master,” Ji (4) Ling (2) told Gao Shun.

Well, Gao Shun fell for the oldest stall tactic in the book and led his army back to Xu Province. When he told Lu Bu what Ji (4) Ling (2) had said, Lu Bu started to get suspicious. And then came a message from Yuan Shu, which said:

“Even though you sent Gao Shun, but Liu Bei remains at large. When we have captured Liu Bei, then I will deliver the promised goods.”

So yeah, Yuan Shu just totally played Lu Bu for a fool. Understandably angry at being had, Lu Bu wanted to declare war on Yuan Shu, but Chen Gong advised against it.

“Yuan Shu has vast troops and ample grain at his base in Shochun (4,1); we cannot underestimate him,” Chen Gong said. “Why don’t we invite Liu Bei back and station him at Xiaopei (3,4) so that he can serve us. Then, in the future, we can use him as our vanguard when we first attack Yuan Shu and then eliminate Yuan Shao. At that point, we would rule the land.”

Lu Bu took this advice and sent a message to Liu Bei, telling him he’s welcome to come back. This message came at a good time for Liu Bei, because when he was trying to take Guangling (3,2), his camp was raided by Yuan Shu and he lost more than half of his army. As he retreated, he ran into Lu Bu’s messenger. Upon reading the letter, Liu Bei was delighted, but his brothers, not so much.

“Lu Bu is a dishonorable man. We cannot trust him,” they said.

“He is being sincere; I have no reason to doubt him,” Liu Bei said.

I’m sure that comment raised more than a few eyebrows, but nonetheless, Liu Bei led his forces back to Xu Province. Fearing suspicion on Liu Bei’s part, Lu Bu first sent his disposable garments, I mean, wives back to him. The two women told Liu Bei about how Lu Bu had stationed men around their residence to protect them from intruders and how Lu Bu often sent supplies to them so that they lacked for nothing.

“See, I knew Lu Bu would not harm my family,” Liu Bei said to Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. He then entered the city to thank Lu Bu. But there was no way that Zhang Fei was going to do anything of the sort. So he just escorted Liu Bei’s wives to Xiaopei (3,4).

When Liu Bei saw Lu Bu and thanked him, Lu Bu said,

“It’s not that I wanted your city. It’s just that your brother Zhang Fei was getting drunk and threatening to kill people, so I was afraid something bad would happen, so I came to defend the city.”

Umm, ok. That’s one way to look at it, I guess. But give Liu Bei credit. He just kind of rolled right along with this charade.

“I’ve long wanted to yield the province to you anyway, brother,” he told Lu Bu.

At this point, Lu Bu made some half-hearted attempt to return the province to Liu Bei, but of course, Liu Bei insisted that he keep it and went back to Xiaopei. Lu Bu provided him with supplies, and the two sides reconciled with each other. Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, of course, were not happy about the outcome, but Liu Bei told them, “We must bend to the circumstances and accept our current lot while we wait for our time. We cannot fight fate.”

Liu Bei really should get a plaque with that phrase engraved on it, because that’s going to be his MO for a while. But for now, he’s settled back in Xiaopei (3,4), and we are going to leave him and check in on a character we haven’t heard from in a while.

So in our story so far, there are three main characters who made their names first in pacifying Yellow Turban rebels and then as part of the coalition against Dong Zhuo. One was Cao Cao, who was currently riding high and running the court in Xuchang. Another was Liu Bei, who was riding ... less high and running something in the tiny hamlet of Xiaopei. The third was Sun (1) Jian (1), the gallant warrior from the Southlands who was currently not running anything, since he got himself killed a while back in a campaign against Liu Biao, the imperial protector of Jing (1) Province.

After Sun Jian died, his eldest son, Sun Ce (4), withdrew to the region south of the Yangzi (2,3) River, where he began to recruit men of talent. But as might be expected of a family that had lost its strong patriarch, things got a bit rough. Sun Ce’s maternal uncle, Wu (2) Jing (3), the governor of Danyang (1,2), got into a squabble with Tao Qian, the late imperial protector of Xu Province, and Sun Ce had to move his family to Qu (1) A (3), while he himself went into Yuan Shu’s service.

Now, Yuan Shu greatly admired Sun Ce’s talents and often lamented, “If I could have a son like Sun Ce, I would die without regret.” Yuan Shu made Sun Ce a commandant and sent him on expeditions against two rivals. Sun Ce returned triumphant, and as it so happened, Yuan Shu was having a feast at

that time for his officials. When he heard that Sun Ce had returned victorious, Yuan Shu summoned him and offered him a seat at the feast.

But Yuan Shu obviously did something wrong during the banquet, because Sun Ce went away displeased and feeling that Yuan Shu had been condescending toward him. This bothered him so much that he paced around the moonlit inner courtyard that night. When he thought of the hero that his father had been and how now he himself had fallen to a mere officer serving under someone else, he couldn't help but start weeping.

Suddenly, a man came in from outside and laughed, "Why are you acting like this? When your honorable father was alive, he often consulted me. So why do you not talk to me about what's bothering you instead of crying to yourself?"

Sun Ce looked up and saw that it was one of his father's former aides, Zhu (1) Zhi (4). Sun Ce wiped away his tears, asked Zhu Zhi (4) to sit down, and said, "I was crying over the fact that I have not been able to realize my father's ambitions."

"Why don't you ask Yuan Shu to let you borrow some troops and go to the Southlands?" Zhu Zhi (4) suggested. "You can say that you are going to help your uncle Wu (2) Jing (3), but instead you can use those troops to achieve something grand rather than serving under someone else forever."

Just as they were speaking, another man came in. "I have overheard your conversation," he said. "I have 100 strong soldiers under my command that can lend a hand."

This man was Lü (3) Fan (4), one of Yuan Shu's advisers. Sun Ce was delighted by his offer and asked him to sit and join the discussion.

"The only concern," Lü (3) Fan (4) said, "is that Yuan Shu might not be willing to lend you the troops."

"I still have the imperial hereditary seal that my father left behind. I can use that as collateral," Sun Ce said.

"Yuan Shu (4) has long desired that seal," Lü (3) Fan (4) said. "If you use that as collateral, he would

surely lend you the troops.”

Now in case you’ve forgotten, that seal was pretty much the reason for Sun Jian’s death. He had found it in the ruins of Luoyang after Dong Zhuo had moved the capital, but Yuan Shao wanted the seal for himself and secretly asked Liu Biao (3), the imperial protector of Jing (1) Province, to attack Sun Jian on his way home to try to take the seal. That started the bad blood between Sun Jian and Liu Biao, and it was on an expedition to seek revenge against Liu Biao that Sun Jian met his end. So this was no small thing that Sun Ce was giving up. But in this case, he was giving up a symbolic token of empire in exchange for the resources to give him a chance to win an empire.

The next day, Sun Ce went to see Yuan Shu. He prostrated himself on the ground and wept.

“My father’s death remains unavenged, and now my maternal uncle, Wu (2) Jing (3), is being bullied by Liu (2) Yao (2), the imperial protector of Yang (2) Province. My family would surely come to harm. I would like to borrow a few thousand of your valiant soldiers and cross the river to save them. If you have your doubts, I can leave as collateral the imperial hereditary seal that my father bequeathed to me.”

The mention of the seal got Yuan Shu’s attention, and after he inspected it, he was more than happy to make the trade.

“I do not lust after your seal,” he told Sun Ce, with as much a straight face as he could muster. “But you can leave it here for now, and I will lend you 3,000 soldiers and 500 horses. After you have pacified Liu Yao (2), return at once. Your current rank is too meager to command an army, so I will petition the court to give you a generalship and make you a commandant. You can pick a date and set out.”

Sun Ce thanked Yuan Shu, picked up his 3,000 troops, gathered up Zhu Zhi (4), Lü (3) Fan (4), and the old generals who had once served under his father, such as Huang Gai and Han (2) Dang (1). On the designated date, he set out to do for himself what Cao Cao had done in the last few episodes -- stake a

claim to a corner of the empire and make a name for himself.

To see if he will succeed, tune in next time on the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast. Thanks for listening.