

Welcome to the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast. This is not an episode; just a brief announcement.

First off all, happy holidays, everyone. And thank you again for your support in the relatively short existence of this podcast so far. It's great to read your comments about how the show has helped you gain a better understanding and greater interest in the novel, which was the main reason I started the podcast.

Second, I just want to let you know that there will be no new episodes until after the new year. I'm taking the holidays to relax, recover from my cold, recharge, and get ahead in preparations for future episodes. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I am expecting to release the next episode sometime in the first week of January.

But, I didn't want to leave you with nothing before then, especially at Christmas time. So, I am going to post a map on the website that shows the major players and the territories they control at our current spot in the story. So far we have covered a little more than 18 chapters in the novel, which has 120 chapters total, so we are about 15 percent through the story, and let me tell ya, things are just starting to get good.

In some ways, everything up to this point has just been setting the stage. So far, we have seen the Han empire splinter into a hundred pieces, with everyone who's anyone trying to stake a claim to their little patch. So at some point, this shattered empire has to begin consolidating into THREE kingdoms. That's in the name of the novel, after all. We've seen some consolidation here and there so far, mostly with minor characters getting picked off, but when we return after the new year, the big boys are going to start getting at each other. I've been getting excited just writing the scripts for the next few episodes, so there is a lot to look forward to in the new year.

The map I'm going to post will help give you a clearer idea of who's who and who's where as we dive into the upcoming episodes. So check it out on the website, [3kingdomspodcast.com](http://3kingdomspodcast.com), spelled with the number 3.

There's one last thing I want to say. From time to time, I've reminded listeners to rate and review the show on iTunes to help make it more visible in the iTunes store so others can discover it, and some of you have, as we have 12 ratings and 8 reviews so far.

On a seemingly unrelated note, one of the things I've been wanting to do as I progress through the novel is to produce supplemental episodes addressing various topics that come up during the narrative but would take too long to really delve into. I've only done one supplemental episode so far, but I want to do more. I'm coming across all sorts of ideas as we move through the story. However, if I take the time that I would usually spend in a particular week producing a regular episode and use it to make a supplemental episode instead, that means we would have to postpone the narrative for another week, and I hate to make you guys wait. But time is a bit of a luxury for me these days, so consistently producing a regular episode and a supplemental episode in the same week is simply unrealistic.

So where am I going with this? Well, I'm going to issue a challenge: Between now and January 30, 2015, for every 10 new ratings the podcast receives on iTunes, I will commit to producing one supplemental episode in addition to the regular weekly episode sometime during 2015. So for example, if we get 30 new ratings between now and January 30, there will be three weeks next year where I post a regular episode AND a supplemental episode. Now, I might still have weeks where I only post a supplemental episode, but those will not count toward this challenge. This will be my way of thanking you for your show of support by providing extra material without making you have to wait an extra week to resume the narrative.

So if you haven't already, go give the show a rating on iTunes. There is a link to our iTunes page near the top of our website, [3kingdomspodcast.com](http://3kingdomspodcast.com). It takes 20 seconds, helps the show attract new listeners, and gives me extra incentive to produce even more Three Kingdoms goodness for you in the coming year. It's win-win.

Alright, have a happy and safe holiday season, everyone, and I will see you next year on the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast. As always, thank you for listening.