XUN YU'S DISCONNECTED STRATEGY:

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!!!Warning: Lots of glazings and yappings are present. So readers' discretion is advised!!!

Strategic and planning notations	Green	
Manipulation, deception notations	Red	
Reasoning, thinking notations	Pink	
Foresight and field skills notations	Yellow	
General/context	Blue	

Note: I'd say it is better to ignore the notations all along, I just put them on to make the writing look engaging and fun, while being informative as boring stale continuous writing might instantly bore a reader.

1) Context that I think fits:

There was a massive (did someone say massive?) battle known as Battle Of Red Cliffs that took place between the years 208 to 209. The battle was an incredibly significant event in that era, as Zhuge planned. I am not going to explain Zhuge Liang's red cliffs planning. But Zhuge planned extensively for the Huarong flood, manipulated EVERYONE involved, misled Zhou Yu away from his true intentions and cornered Wei in the battle. But Zhuge's intention was to establish a Tripartite system. The Tripartite system referred to the establishment of three kingdoms, Wei Wu and Shu, disregarding the previous rule of Han. Zhuge planned for the Tripartite system, because Liu Bei's influence was incredibly hopeless and Zhuge wanted to construct Liu Bei's influence to be at least one of the three important kingdoms of the era. Zhuge recognised Zhou Yu's strategic brilliance and foresaw that Zhou Yu would crush Wei still as an one-man-army, but Zhuge only wanted Zhou Yu to defeat Wei, not annihilate Wei from existence as Zhou Yu planned. Because if Wei were to perish, the conflict would shift from three to only two kingdoms, between Wu and Wu. Wu was already massively more powerful than Shu, and after annihilating Wei, they would be even more empowered, and hence would result in the perish of Wu. So Zhuge isolated Zhou Yu from Wei by misleading him with his strategy, and established the Tripartite pact.

However, Zhuge's planning did invite problems not to Wu, but to the Han dynasty. Establishment of the three kingdoms would mean the destruction of the Han dynasty, as it would be powerless under the new establishment. The Han dynasty was an integral

national dynasty of China 2000 years ago, and thousands of loyalists had defended the Han dynasty resolutely. So of course the loyalists of the great Han wouldn't allow it to be destroyed. Xun Yu was one of the Han loyalists, he was an integral secretariat of Cao Cao's factions, whose diplomacy and logistical intelligence were considered the most significant work of Cao Cao's faction. Xun Yu believed Cao Cao would save the Han dynasty from the destructive period, with conviction, which is why he joined Cao Cao in the first place. But after the battle of red cliffs, Xun Yu's belief in Cao Cao wavered as Cao Cao agreed to the Tripartite pact. So Xun Yu gave up on his belief in Cao Cao and constructed his own scheme to prevent Cao Cao from establishing the Han dynasty. As we saw in the Battle Of Tong Pass arc, Xun Yu executed an untraceable scheme that nearly annihilated Cao Cao and his faction entirely, but Guo Jia's contingency saved Cao Cao's life, and Jia Xu neutered Xun Yu's scheme and saved Cao Cao's faction. Fearing Xun Yu's further schemes, Cao Cao faction came up with a scheme of their own to assassinate Xun Yu in a ceremony, with large crowds and flashy events to misdirect everyone from realising Xun Yu's assassination.

Now I am going to contextualise Xun Yu's final move chapter, Jia Xu and the bald kid discuss some talks (that doesn't matter for this scene), but the main dialogue comes where they both discuss Jia Xu's time in Dong Zhuo's faction. Jia Xu states that his time in the faction was terribly short as Lu Bu quickly took over and multiple sequences of events occurred and Jia Xu's final time in the faction was using one of Dong Zhuo's nephews (???) death to lure Lu Bu and destroy him. Hence he was not able to reason out why exactly Dong Zhuo was able to acquire the hearts of so many, and they discussed Xu Lin (the main advisor of Dong Zhuo, I assume you know) tactics and how he was a vital element in the faction. And Jia Xu then suddenly declares that he finally understood how Dong Zhuo won the hearts of so many. Basically there was a beautiful woman (they are talking about Diao Chan here ig) who escaped slavery after her father was captured. She ran away and was acquired by Dong Zhuo. Dong Zhuo, using her talent in dancing, mass manipulated the crowds into a sense of home and deep emotions. Jia Xu elucidates how this will enter inside the mind of the crowds, and when Dong Zhuo gave his speech right after the programme, his words would enter deeply inside their minds and he would be able to plant his ideas inside them. Jia Xu slowly connects the dots (new inductive + abductive reasoning for Jia Xu) on Diao Chan's involvement in this programme, the Xun Yu attackers and Xun Yu's involvement. Jia Xu finally figures out Xun Yu's ultimate strategy! It is not to launch his ideology directly, not to people, but to plant and enforce his ideas deeply inside each of the individuals in the crowd's mind, so that it can come to fruition later and bore the fruit he desired. Repeating the same tactic of Dong Zhuo!

[<u>Theory:</u> *Zhuge Liang might have planned Xun Yu's revolt from the start, because Xun Yu's turn against Cao Cao was instigated by Zhuge's scheme*

to establish the Tripartite, so Zhuge might have foresaw the line of events as far as the Battle Of Tong Pass. How will instigating Xun Yu's turn against Cao Cao help Zhuge Liang and his faction? Well obvious, for starters, Wu and Shu would have an upperhand against Wei for once, and two, Wu would have been worn down by their attack against Cao Cao, and maybe Zhuge foresaw these opportunities. You might ask, well Zhuge didn't want Wei to perish, no? Maybe Zhuge foresaw Jia Xu's strategic acumen as well, so he might have predicted that Wei wouldn't perish from Xun Yu's schemes immediately. But this theory is not confirmed and just based on assumptions, so just skip this and read the rest]

Note: You can ignore the above context really, it's just for a brief overview.

2) To summarise why Wei was preparing against Xun Yu:

- Cao Cao, Sima Yi, Yan Qiu, Jia Xu and basically the Wei kingdom was launching this event because Jia Xu and Sima Yi were able to identify the real thorn of the Wei kingdom all along... Xun Yu, the second genius.
- But Xun Yu masterfully was able to eliminate any ties to his guilt by allowing himself to be monitored and demoted constantly under Cao Cao, hence they would have no proof to actually accuse Xun Yu and if they did frame him or execute him without any evidence, the people will turn against Cao Cao.
- Xun Yu's strategy to launch a campaign to crush Wei from inside and out, was a strategy he set rails for multiple years ahead so that he could shield his innocence after disallowing any interruptions.
- Jia Xu, notably, was the first one to connect the dots and deduce the information too, Jia Xu is very good at reasoning damn.
- How did he deduce Xun Yu's that guy after all? Jia Xu had the premises of:
=> During our childhood, Xun Yu was the only one who never got caught stealing watermelons from the fields.
=> It must be someone from the Wei faction too, because the internal chaos must be orchestrated by someone involved in it.
=> Xun Yu is one of the internal ministers of Wei.
=> Establishment of Wei would collapse Han dynasty
=> Xun Yu is a great devotee of Han and dislikes any harm to it.
=> All other geniuses like Zhuge Liang and Pang Tong are too far away
=> Guo Jia, Zhou Yu and Yuan Fang are dead, so obviously they are not the schemers.

=> The assistant of Xun Yu would be a smart and close individual. Xun You cannot be the assistant as he is actively working against him and Sima Yi cannot be too. Pang Tong is working with Zhuge Liang, so cannot be. The only genius who is actively hiding their intentions is Zhao Sheng. So Zhao Sheng might be the orchestrator as others aren't as conclusive as his.
Hence Jia Xu can inductively and abductively conclude with just these premises that Xun Yu was the orchestrator and Zhao Sheng was the assistant orchestrator. But this cannot be used as evidence to execute Xun Yu. As Jia Xu himself stated, this conclusion is an extrapolated conclusion, which cannot be used to frame or execute Xun Yu.

3) Basic events of the arcs prior to the festival arc itself:

- Xun Yu's strategy in the Tong Pass arc was to use the thorn (that was foreshadowed in Guandu) Cao Cao possessed within his territory, the Ma clan to launch a campaign against him, while using the politicians (or those white clothes sporting pals) inside Cao Cao's faction to rebel secretly, causing chaos within and also cutting off Cao Cao's supply line (or the salt organisation), attacking him from all sides and completely obliterating Cao Cao to ruins
- This strategy was deadly, because effectively it caused immense chaos, constant pressure and attack on all sides for Cao Cao to escape.
- Xun Yu persuaded Zhao Sheng using profits that Zhao Sheng could lead the Ma faction and that this collaboration leads to a common goal and provides greater benefits to Zhao Sheng.
- The only reason Cao Cao could escape is because of Guo Jia's contingency with Sima Yi, using Xu Chu to protect Cao Cao and leveraging Shanyue organisation's ships, (which were owned by Sima Yi's wife's family).
- Jia Xu, then to reduce chaos and stop Xun Yu's aim, leverages on his own plan where he uses a sequence of types of spies to completely neutralise the Ma faction as well as the chaos.
- So Cao Cao only survived because of Guo Jia's contingency with Sima Yi and Jia Xu's counteractive strategy, proving Xun Yu to be a deadly strategist.

4) Xun Yu's master strategy in the Battle of Tong pass

- Xun Yu was a prominent internal minister of the Wei kingdom. He extensively managed the internal faction of Cao for years. He was chosen by them because Cao Cao recognised his talent in diplomacy and negotiation, hence he was selected.

Examples of his incredible feats in negotiation such as logically manipulating Chen Gong to leave using the tribes in the Battle of Puyang arc and such showcase his clear intelligence in those areas. But as years passed by, he grew increasingly discontent with Cao Cao's actions towards the Han empire as well as the growing alienation and destruction of the Han dynasty, as the establishment of tripartite marks the end of Han dynasty. So Xun Yu formulated an incredibly complex and concealed strategy to dismantle Wei from ending the Han dynasty by establishing Wei. Why would it destroy the Han? Because the Han was established as the imperial dynasty of China which ruled over all of China, but the establishment of the three kingdoms would mean that there would be no power for the Han emperor to rule over with and hence, the Han would be no more. So Xun Yu must prevent Cao Cao's faction from establishing the three kingdoms.

Note: I will refer to Cao Cao's faction as 'Wei', even though they haven't been established as Wei in the manhua yet, as stretching the words as 'Cao Cao's faction' is too inefficient. Also I would inevitably be mixing up Sun and Wu as each other (they mean the same thing) as I am not very intellectually developed to fix such details.

- I haven't noticed this detail, until dickyboi pointed out that Xun Yu deceived Xiahou Dun prior and framed Ma Teng of treason. Which blocked Ma Chao from forming a revolt on Cao Cao yet. Why did he delay Liang province's revolt? The reason is he planned for Cao Cao to be dismantled and crushed by not 2 or 3 but by multiple ways of warfare, he needed to align everything perfectly together to completely annihilate Wei. So Xun Yu, using an imperial decree, allowed Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang to attack Cao Cao army, particularly his Qing army to weaken it. Since Cao Cao's attention has been turned to Sun-Liu problems, Xun Yu can now execute his strategy even more effectively. Why? Cao Cao cannot focus on both Sun and Liang province shenanigans, so now that his attention has been narrowed to Sun. The sudden launch of the campaign would absolutely catch Cao Cao off guard.
- Xun Yu firstly in his employment as a diplomat, grew his relations with Hedong salt department so as to use them in the future. He helped the leader of Hedong salt department to rise in influence, achieve communicational/transportation influence and appointed them as rations distributions. So by appointing them as rations distributors, Xun Yu effectively planned to use them at the right moment. The guy Huang Kui was the owner of Hedong Salt department and he collaborated with Xun Yu for his tong pass strategy. So Xun Yu nurtured the leader, Huang Kui to follow his schemes and plans, by nurturing him to be loyal to Han??? Or Xun Yu himself. Hedong salt department's surface level exploitation to infiltrate and cut off Wei's rations distribution and survival. But it gets deeper.

- Xun Yu not only used the Hedong salt department, but also completely exploited Liang province. He also instigated Liang province to revolt. How? Ma Teng and Han Sui are prominent rulers appointed by Cao Cao in northern China, they have been bad boys and they did not like each other as Han Sui previously executed Ma Chao's mother and sister in public, which led to separation of the province. Now Xun Yu was able to anticipate the series of events that could happen if they were to revolt. He anticipated that Ma Chao and Han Sui would recognise and comply that they would stand no chance against Cao Cao if they were to be against them separately as Cao Cao has immense resources and land, so Ma Chao and Han Sui would recognise the need to unite the immense Liang province to attack Wei. Hence foreseeing the possibility that Han Sui and Ma Chao can unite the Liang province to attack Cao Cao.
- Now how did Xun Yu manage to instigate a feud between Cao Cao and Liang province to make them wage war on each other? Xun Yu promoted Hedong salt department into an organisation with immense influence exactly for this reason (and multiple other reasons). Basically Hedong salt department used their influence to block communication lines between the province and the kingdom, disrupting Cao Cao from properly planning anything for the battle. Xun Yu used the Hedong salt department to spread massive rumors that Cao Cao had waged war on Liang province, which instigated the Liang province revolt. And as Xun Yu anticipated, Ma Chao reunited with Han Sui and united Liang province together to attack on Cao Cao as he knew that Han Sui and Ma Chao have a personal connection with each other as well as prudential reasons that Wei has massive army and logistics advantage compared to the isolated armies of each warlords in Liang province. Ma Chao not only united with Han Sui, but with Qiang and other barbarians to attack Wei. The Qiang army would produce even a bigger problem to Wei, which is their horsemen who are incredibly powerful with their horses. So by this tactic, Xun Yu has successfully turned Liang province and Wei into attacking each other using the Hedong salt department. Now it's noteworthy to include that Xun Yu did not spam the same tactic to indirectly manipulate each faction of Liang province to uprising. Like for the barbarians, he logically manipulated Ma Chao and the faction to recognise their 'ambition' for their faction as a means to unite them under the Liang province to launch a massive attack on Cao Cao's troops and army. The attack spanned over a number of regions, proving once again how deadly Xun Yu's strategy was. First in Taiyuan and Hejian, the revolt started. Then areas like Hong Nong and Zuo Pingyi would unite together with the eight factions west of the pass, this combined campaign/attack would be so massive, as this revolt would rival the magnitude of the **Yellow Turban Rebellion,** which is totally off the charts.
- Another tactic that Xun Yu executed using the Hedong salt department is the blockage of communication and logistical aspects of the army. It has been

established clearly in the manhua that communication and rations are of utmost importance in war. Rations involve proper management of resources such as to feed and nurture the soldiers while on the battle. Without it, soldiers would have no way to survive in the battle long enough to actually win the battle, as lack of logistical management and rations would deprive the soldiers. Hence, Xun Yu targeted such a vital aspect of the army to further dismantle Wei. How did Xun Yu exactly achieve this? Xun Yu used the Hedong salt department once again to operate this tactic as well. Xun Yu used the Hedong salt department's influence to block any form of information flow to Wei. Why exactly? Because without any information to base their strategy, Wei strategists can't manage the situation properly and therefore the troops cannot either. With Cao Cao's interaction with Sima Yi, we can infer that Xun Yu has successfully narrowed Wei's mode of communication as ancient as carrier birds, which is an extremely inefficient and slow method of communication line, ensuring that Wei would always be a step behind in this sequence of moves, This is deadly, as now Wei would be completely deprived of any form of awareness of the situation, combined with the fact that remaining of Xun Yu's strategy is going to cause them even more problems.

- Now onto the tactic to block their rations. As already mentioned, rations are a vital aspect of battle, so Xun Yu planned to use the Hedong salt department once again to achieve this. He used Hedong salt department to not supply any line of rations to Wei so as to deprive the soldiers of basic needs to survive, a cruel method to completely block soldier's morale as well as to basically have them dead as they will die of starvation if proper food is not provided. Now if the rations are not enough, how can Wei even properly plan to attack the Liang army? Ma Chao was actively chasing Cao Cao's army, with the unity of multiple warlords like Yang Qiu to attack Cao Cao at the same time. This is such a deadly tactic as not only are their resources and management falling apart due to rations blockage by Hedong salt department, they are also being actively chased by Ma Chao as well. Deadly tactic.

- But wouldn't Cao Cao just figure out that the Hedong salt department is cheating them and that they are actually working under the orchestrator to annihilate them? Xun Yu already prepared a contingency plan for it as well. Xun Yu shielded Hedong salt department innocence by distorting the perception of Cao Cao on Hedong salt department actions amidst all the chaos. Wei, who has been immensely crippled by the rations blockage, would inevitably question Huang Kui. Xun Yu would also suspect Hedong salt department when this line of events occurs, so Xun Yu prepared the strategy to be aligned with weather patterns, so as to logically manipulate Wei into thinking the salt department is sending rations to Tong pass area due to bad weather over that area so as to provide them with necessary needs, which would justify why they were sending rations there. But Hedong salt department was

actually sending rations to the Liang province army so as to empower their army against Cao Cao army, while simultaneously crippling Wei of the necessary resources to survive the battle. With this cripple, Wei cannot hold their ground against Liang province. This tactic can be inferred from the report that Guo Ang produced for Jia Xu during the arc.

- Now Xun Yu also planned the place exactly. Now he was also able to instigate Wu to help the Han supporters and Liang province to strike at Wei kingdom while Wei was already dealing with at the same time as this battle. The places Xun Yu lured Wei into fighting were inherently advantageous to Wu , as it invited them to attack. Hefei and sort were the places Wu can attack. Why would Wu attack? Xun Yu basically gave away a number of factors to Wu so as to lure them to fight against Wei. He gave them the most advantageous place for Wu to attack, the mode of attack could be on waters which is their specialty and combined with the fact that Cao Cao was being attacked by Liang province and has been already crippled at that period of time. So this was a perfect opportunity for Wu to strike. So by using a series of logical manipulation, Xun Yu has successfully secured a combined attack on Wei from both the Wu kingdom and Liang province, which I think did not happen as well as planned due to Jia Xu's counters. But this aspect of the scheme is already incredible enough. I will expand more on this later.

- [**Lots of assumptions-based statements here, so skip this yellow part if you don't want to deal with any hypotheticals**] But what if Wu and Liang province do win against Wei? Either Wu would pull away and return back to their southern region, and allow Liang province to establish the northern region for themselves. Or instigate yet another battle. It would not be surprising if Xun Yu planned this contingency as well. If Wu were not to pull away after Wei's hypothetical fall and try to conquer the northern regions, then both Liang province and Wu would wear down each other. But if they have to wear down each other, Liang province must be equal to Wu, right? Yeah, Xun Yu can just cut off Liang province's supply line of rations and logistics using Hedong Salt department to equalise them with Wu, which would mean both will wear down each other. Then Xun Yu can use this as an opportunity for Shu to strike both, combined with Xun Yu's help. This means, Xun Yu can help Shu to defeat the worn down Liang province and Wu, which would mean the fall of both factions and rise of Shu. Now why would Xun Yu exactly allow Shu to rise to the top and not Wu or Wei? Because Wu fits his ideology the best compared to either of the factions. Wu has an ideology not really to establish Han as the pivotal government of the world, and Wei obviously since they have been exploiting the Han emperor for years so as to gain influence. While Shu actually possessed Han supporters such as Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang, who both envisioned restoring Han, combined with the fact that Liu Bei has claimed Han

relations which would make him a more credible choice. Did this line of events occur? No. Is this a true confirmed feat? No, it's more so a plausible theory than an actual feat. **Please skip this yellow part if you don't want to deal with my hypotheticals.**

- Xun Yu also formulated an entire uprising of Han supporters and internal factions in Wei. Basically, Xun Yu used the bearded guy as the proxy leader of the Han supporters within the faction. They have successfully formed into a faction of hidden revolters who have been planning to cause chaos on Wei. The manhua also details what their strategy was (It was Xun Yu's strategy actually). The strategy started with a rumor of waging war on Zhang Lu, which was achieved by using the Hedong salt department to spread rumors on the land about the supposed war. This waging of war on Zhang Lu agitated Zhang Lu and his men, which in turn spread to the province and agitated the entire province to unite. Why? Because Wei is attacking Zhang Lu and will conquer his land, and Wei would obviously turn to conquer the remainder of the province. Now why would they unite against this? Now if your memory power is a little off, I will recite it again. Wei was a faction with immense resources, numbers, land, influence and minds, it was easily the biggest and most powerful faction of the three kingdoms period. While Liang province was a disunited group of factions whose individual resources, army and power would be a complete child's play for Cao Cao, so Xun Yu obviously foresaw that Ma Chao would propose a prudential unity in Liang province, so as to counter Wei's immense resources and advantage. This uprising against Wei by Liang province also has an additional effect of uprising refugees in the place, which means Wei has another additional problem to deal with: insiders within the area to guard against. Xun Yu expected Ma Chao's decision, as much of a dumbass Ma Chao is shows Xun Yu's noteworthy anticipation as well as emotional intelligence. But that's not the end of Xun Yu's strategy, not at all.

- Xun Yu not only designed the chaos between Cao Cao and the Liang province, but also sowed the seeds of destruction between the sons of Cao Cao. Xun Yu identified the key pattern of many destruction of clans and factions, which is the fight over the heir. So Xun Yu basically created a conflict between Cao Pi supporters and Cao Zhi supporters within the faction. Cao Cao was an aged man at this period of time, so obviously everyone was expecting some competence from both Cao Zhi and Cao Pi so that Cao Cao could choose them according to their skill levels. So Cao Zhi soldiers and Cao Pi soldiers were constantly trying to outperform each other in battles and skill levels so as to impress Cao Cao into choosing their desired leader as the heir for a kingdom as immense as Wei, their actions have been as extreme as sabotaging each other. Xun Yu was able to identify this certain aspect of Wei's structure and was able to align it together with the rest of his strategy to use it as another leverage to

destroy Wei's power. As we can infer from the reactions of the soldiers of Wei to the sudden launch of attack by Liang province on them, we can observe the split of soldiers in the army. The soldiers explain how they feel as if they shouldn't let the Cao Pi soldiers overtake them in skill or accomplishments, we can see the immediate split and struggle between Cao Zhi soldiers and Cao Pi soldiers. Xun Yu instigated this by employing them with an immense problem to instigate the soldiers into trying and prove themselves, as well as cause a mutual conflict or envy over each other's accomplishment, especially as shown from the Cao Pi supporters. So by exploiting the conflict between the brothers Cao Pi and Cao Zhi, Xun Yu instigated an additional problem for Wei to solve.

- There is an additional layer of Xun Yu's strategy that I didn't even touch upon and that is the manipulation of Sun and Liu shenanigans. Xun Yu aligned his disconnected strategy to be exactly when Wu and Liu would be fighting Wei in the southern territory. Wei, prior to this sequence of events, was battling against Zhou Yu and Wu in the southern territory. It was an entirely different arc ('Nan departure arc') and the strategies employed were completely different. But the situation was that Cao Cao and Wei were under attack from the Wu faction of the southern regions and the Wu faction of the southern-east regions. So the Wei strategists deployed Cao Ren and Cao Hong in Xiangyang as reinforcements for the army to battle against Shu and Wu if they were to launch an attack against Wei. But that's not the end of the story. Liang province revolt is an incredibly jarring revolt that could overthrow Wei from the top, and not only that, they could completely annihilate the faction altogether as well. So the entirety of Wei must and must defend against the revolt, as the success of such a massive revolt would annihilate the faction. So reinforcements from Cao Ren and Cao Hong in Xiangyang must join with the defense against Liang province. So Wei must pull back the reinforcements, right? Easy? No. Xun Yu did not end his schemes there. He orchestrated the situation to be as forceful as possible. Wei cannot simply pull back the reinforcements easily without any concern, the reinforcements from Cao Ren and Cao Hong were meant to defend against Wu. So what would happen if the reinforcements for the Wu pull away? Wu would obviously leverage on Wei's defenceless area to launch an attack on Wei by attacking Hefei, meaning Wei has successfully invited another problem for them to indulge upon which was orchestrated entirely by Xun Yu :) When everyone was going hopeless, Jia Xu took the initiative and countered this crazily layered trap. How did he counter it? He ordered Guo Ang to spread rumors that Zhang Liao would be returning to Hefei so as to aid them, which would keep Wu guarded and stiff. Which could borrow the faction sometime for some strategies, such as borrowing reinforcements from Yue Jin.

- I failed to mention earlier. But Xun Yu foresaw Wei's entire strategy to defeat Wu and Wei after losing a major battle to Zhou Yu ***[Note: He's built different]***. After losing the battle against Wu which resulted in the huge humiliation of Wei, Wei strategized a counter-strategy to guard against Wu and Wu. Their immediate aim was to secure a win against Wu, or atleast guard against Wu from their attack. They accomplished this outcome, by strategizing Jing as bait to lure Wu and Shu towards the area. So after luring them to the bait, Wei wouldn't take anymore actionable warfare on Jing. Why? Jing was known as a very strategic place to reside upon, strategic places are basically locations or bases from which a faction could execute or contain their operations in, if the location they chose upon was incredibly strategic, it would allow the faction to make more mobile and actionable steps as the faction with the lesser strategic position would need to shield their weakness as well as the battle. So by luring Shu and Wu to Jing, they trapped both factions against each other, which would result in a battle between Shu and Wu, and Wei would completely withdraw from the battle and observe the battle. After the battle, Shu and Wu would be obviously worn down by the battle in Jing and Wei could use this as a leverage to launch an attack on the weakened Shu and Wu faction. This strategy was foreseen by Xun Yu and he aligned the 'Jing Bait Strategy' harmoniously together with the rest of his 'disconnected strategy'. Because Xun Yu foresaw that Wu would foresee this strategy and that Liu Bei would withdraw from Xiakou. Now Wu would be located in Jing, which means they would be in a strategic position for them to attack Wei on. So Xun Yu aligned his strategy to happen at this period of time, so that Liang province's attack on Wei would be even more deadly as now Wei have to deal with not only Liang province, but they will also have to deal with Wu faction's attack from Hefei. So Xun Yu aligned the chaos of Jing and the rise of Shu and Wu together to launch an even bigger attack on Wei.
- Xun Yu not only used the Hedong salt department, but also controlled everything from the Sun clan, Shanyue and Navy of Jing to launch an attack on Wei which is so large that it is virtually unstoppable with layers of shielding. The Hedong salt department has been infiltrating the Shanyue and Shan organisations for years to account for these situations. Shanyue has nine commanderies that are spread across the kingdom, three of which are near the waterways, with the regular navy units. Shan clan used to be an agent of the Shanyue organisation, they worked predominantly on Jing and Tong pass areas. They once worked in the southern areas, but their opposing conflict with the Sun clan forced the Shan clan to shift their trade to Jing and Tong pass regions. As Fei Zhan explained, the Shan clan only used the banner of Shanyue and that they took the same route as the southern salt gangs prior to their transformation. So by transforming their trade, Shan clan and Shanyue were able to prevent the southeast from eliminating them entirely. He continued to

explain how no government could entirely prevent illegal salt or iron trades in the country, that even Hedong salt department was merely a deal between the officials and the merchants, so Hedong salt department was able to lure a lot of merchant groups to their side. This illicit trading and dealing was further empowered by the chaos of Jing. So, as Fei Zhan continued, the Shan clan transferred their mariners of the Danyang to the Tong pass regions and served under the court ever since. But there's more to the story. The Shan clan wasn't transferred over to the region to merely serve the court and earn a salary, it was aligned by Xun Yu so that the Shan clan could be able to secretly support the region west of the Tong pass. They colluded with the people of Liang province for years and the Liang people still colluded with them even after they discovered the Shan clan's history in the south-east. A masterful double dipping strategy!

- Xun Yu exploited this and The Hedong salt department targeted them because they were of huge profit to them if they did control them. Because the monopolization of the waterways by the Shan clan, due to the northward troops, could earn them a new way to attack Wei on the waterways as well. Xun Yu also crippled the communication line between Cao Cao and his navy in the south (who were guarding against the Sun clan), which prevented Cao Cao from properly giving orders to his men to save him on waterways. So, the retreat could even be blocked by a few boats in Puban Fort and would result in Cao Cao's capture, a brilliant set of traps. Not only that, there were no warships in the Yellow river, but the warships used were from Wei in red cliffs. Sima Yi explained that Cao Cao built the warships so as to train the navy in Ye's Xuanwu lake for naval training. But over the period of time, the forgotten engineered warships have been disassembled and reassembled by someone in Jingkou. And as Sima Yi explained his conclusion from his investigation that the Sun clan and Shanyue were only solicited as vanguards to capture the waterways, that their main force is a former navy unit under the leadership of the late Huang Zu of Jing, and that their warships have been already been reassembled for Ma Chao to board and strike behind Cao Cao's defense.

- Not only is this formulated by Xun Yu, Xun Yu further shielded this by aligning the Hedong salt department to this aspect of the strategy as well. Xun Yu used the Hedong salt department to back up the resources and supply line of Liang province, inviting more attack from Ma Chao and his troops as Cao Cao has been lured too deep into the territory without any resources or rations to manage his troops against the Liang province, while the same province is being backed up by Hedong salt department. Wei is completely paralysed and crippled by Xun Yu's traps. The waterways were being taken over by the navy units of Shanyue and other factions, as well as the landways being supported by the Hedong salt department. So the schemes of the loyalists and the orchestrator, Xun Yu, were provided by Hedong salt

department over land and by the Shan clan/Shanyue mariners over water. Hedong salt department existed as a cover for all the attacking factions, both on water and land. So Xun Yu was able to make use of the Hedong salt department as a cover for the attack. As stated in the manhua itself, it does not matter if Wei deduced that they engineered the attack from waterways using the Shanyue organisation, as the northerners would be no match for the mariners on water anyways even if they tried to counter the attack with their own navy. But that's not the end of it lol. Not only did Xun Yu align his Hedong salt department as a cover to all the attacking factions, he weaponised the weather in several layers.

- What do I mean by this? Wei is already under attack. Wei is not only attacked by Ma Chao and Han Sui's troops, but also by the troops from Taiyuan, Heijan, Hong Nong, Zuo Pingyi and Eight factions west of the pass which would rival the yellow turban rebellion. But Xun Yu kept increasing the already hopeless stakes, he threatened Wei with Sun clan's attack from Hefei and from waterways, attack from the Jingkou warships, Puban ford capture and etc... Such planning would completely annihilate Wei from existence, but Xun Yu shielded his strategy even further, by weaponizing weather. Remember how I mentioned Huang Kui would use the bad weather as a pretext to appeal to why they were sending rations and supply lines to Tong pass when they were really supporting Liang province's resources and supply line? Xun Yu did not align his strategy with the bad weather, just to justify why Hedong salt department were providing rations to Tong pass region. He aligned the bad weather to destroy Wei even further. Also the bad weather I am mentioning about was the incoming winter. How did Xun Yu weaponise it? Xun Yu added problems behind problems for Wei, so much so that it would be near impossible to manage them all, unless Wei foresaw each and every problem that Xun Yu would instigate. Xun Yu aligned his strategy with Liang province to revolt, attack and chase Cao Cao down with their combined force on land, as well as indirectly manipulate the Han loyalists within the internal faction of Wei to use Shan clan, Shanyue and the Jingkou navy to attack Wei on the waterways, as well as manipulate Sun clan as a threat from Hefei. He did not end there and weaponised the winter as a threat. Wei was already badly suffering from attack on multiple fronts, but Xun Yu also eliminated their supply line and rations using the Hedong salt department. So even if they were to hold off against the attack for a few months or so, the cold winter and deprivation of rations would starve Wei of any power and in the end, would ultimately get engulfed by the attack. Absolutely unpreventable attack.

- Another aspect of the strategy to mention is the manipulation of the Eight genius, Zhao Sheng and allying with the Eight eccentrics to further boost his strategy. It was mentioned that the Shan clan used to be twelve clans on that route between Yellow river's south and the Tong pass region, which transformed into fifty clans. As Xun Yu

mentioned, the Salt gangs would revolt once the path of wealth, which was the river route, gets threatened. Which means, Xun Yu aligned his strategy to instigate the revolt of Salt gangs to aid Sun clan's attack on Wei. Xun Yu used the Eight genius, Zhao Sheng, to further support the attack. As described by both the sixth genius, Pang Tong and the fatty, Zhao Sheng was known as the lobbyist whose persuasion has never been refused by anyone. So by using Zhao Sheng as the lobbyist and Shanyue as the cover, Xun Yu was able to organise the Salt gangs and the other clans into a larger organisation, who would again be used to attack Wei. So the real attack was coming. The ships, from Lake Xuanwu, have arrived for the attack. The Elites from Liang province would float into the Tong pass region to help Hedong salt department cut off the supply line. With help from the salt gangs, the Sun clan's mobile unit has set their ambush in the central plains. So now even if Shanyue were to defect. The immense attack that Xun Yu so intricately strategized for, has been set up.

- Incredible strategy! Though there might be more to this strategy than what I summarised.

4.1) Xun Yu's contingency to shield his innocence:

- Now, I will summarise Xun Yu's contingency to shield his innocence. Now, the strategy launched some absolutely hopeless stakes for Wei. So Wei would obviously try to narrow down who the orchestrator of this intricate strategy would be. There are several layers to how Xun Yu shielded his strategy, it actually goes several layers deep, it's similar to Hannibal's misdirection plan in the TV show, except it was simply a side strategy that Xun Yu engineered for his overall strategy. Xun Yu, on the first layer, executed his strategy in such a natural and continuous manner. The strategy began as far back as when Sun clan and Wei clashed in a battle. Then to guard against the Sun clan from attacking Hefei, reinforcements from Cao Ren and Cao Hong were stationed near Xiangyang to stop the attack. Remember when I said Xun Yu framed Ma Teng of treason and delayed Liang province's revolt? The reason he did that was to align the revolt with the rest of his strategy, but also to flow the alignment naturally.
- An immediate revolt from Liang province after the chaos of Jing would immediately raise suspicions. So by delaying the revolt through framing and capture of Ma Teng, Xun Yu was able to delay the revolt for his strategy, while simultaneously providing another reason for the revolt. So when the revolt occurred, Xun Yu framed Ma Teng and Ma Chao's brothers' capture as a reason for Ma Chao's uprising against Wei. Xun Yu, like I already mentioned, also used the bad weather as a red herring to justify why the Hedong salt department was sending rations to Tong

pass. The revolt of salt gangs cannot be traced to be anyone's orchestration as it was born from the chaos of Jing. Xun Yu, using Hedong salt department, was able to artificially engineer rations shortage to further misdirect Wei's scrutiny. Xun Yu has been orchestrating all of this naturally to frame the whole strategy as a set of coincidences that are probable. Xun Yu prepared a secondary layer to the identity of the orchestrator if Cao Cao's strategists or people do pierce through the first layer.
- The second layer was the Han loyalists faction within Wei. Xun Yu framed them as the orchestrators of the strategy. He framed them by not directly manipulating them, but instead indirectly manipulating them. How did he indirectly manipulate them? He strategized Hedong salt department to seem like it's their asset and manipulated them into using it how they want, he used Shan clans and Shanyue whom he manipulated as opportunities that he provided to the loyalists to use, he used the Xuanwu lake's warships as opportunities and so much more for the Han loyalists to exploit. So he indirectly manipulated the Han loyalists to formulate the strategy he wanted without involving himself, by preparing each alignment beforehand and using it as a bait to lure the faction into the strategy he wanted. Brilliant tactic! Xun Yu used these opportunistic baits to indirectly lure the faction into formulating the strategy he wanted. Why? Because he prepared them as the secondary layer of protection. Xun Yu, to eliminate his connections with Han loyalists, also fabricated an image of attachment to Cao Cao to shoo away the Han loyalists from using him. Why? Because Han loyalists wouldn't feel safe to ally with a person, who was very much involved in Cao Cao's operations, to operate under their schemes. So he further shielded his innocence, by eliminating any direct ties to the Han loyalists factions. He framed the court officials as the orchestrators so acutely that even the court officials denounced any ties with Xun Yu to these schemes.
- Xun Yu also eliminated any ties he had with the strategy, by persuading Huang Kui, the only one who knew Xun Yu's orchestrations with the strategy, to kill himself before the court. The place of Huang Kui's death could also be used as a suspicion to frame the court officials and it also simultaneously completely cuts ties with the operations. Huang Kui was the leader of Hedong salt department, Xun Yu planned for him to kill himself while he was under surveillance of Wei's men. Why does Huang Kui killing himself at the time of Xun Yu's surveillance shenanigans, matter? Because Xun Yu wanted to eliminate any concrete evidence to frame him. Xun Yu was involved in the matters of the Hedong salt department prior to his demotion. So Xun Yu even accounted for possible accusations as baseless as his involvement with the Hedong salt department (such as promoting them) to question him. So since he was under heavy surveillance at the time of Huang Kui's death, there can't be any further clues to frame him.

- Xun Yu planted incredibly minute details to further eliminate his ties with the Hedong salt department. Small details such as elimination of salt production to Xun Yu's house arrest, to support his alibi. Also the chaos of the situation in itself suggested that the scheme wasn't constructed by a single person, but rather by a group. The amount of factions involved in this strategy was staggering. To state the amount of attacking factions involved in the strategy, the entirety of Liang province, Hedong salt department, salt gangs, naval forces at Jingkou, the eight eccentrics, the eight geniuses of Professor Water Mirror, Shu kingdom, Wu kingdom. So the mere thought that a single person orchestrated all the attacking factions would sound unbelievable.
- Why did Xun Yu formulate this contingency in the first place? Xun Yu was afraid of Sima Yi and Jia Xu's strategic prowess. Xun Yu formulated this avalanche of a strategy, manipulated very variables to attack Cao Cao and kept increasing the stakes. But... Xun Yu foresaw two people who could still counter his strategy. One is Sima Yi, who was basically the vessel of Guo Jia's contingencies and as we further saw his improvisation in the arc, we can understand why Xun Yu identified Sima Yi as a threat. But the person he was really afraid of was Jia Xu. Jia Xu was the third genius of the school of Professor Water Mirror and was a specialist of dark arts of war and psychological warfare. Xun Yu was terribly afraid of him. As we saw in the arc, when everyone was confused and bewildered by the circumstances, only Jia Xu completely understood the situation, not even Sima Yi. Jia Xu foresaw the strategy unfolding and laid the foundation for his complete counter-strategy. So Xun Yu understood Jia Xu's strategic prowess and shielded his innocence as a contingency to not get executed once Jia Xu neutralised his strategy.

5) I only mentioned Xun Yu's actions. Let's summarise Guo Jia's contingency for Cao Cao's survival against Xun Yu's smokescreen and Jia Xu's incredible counter-strategy:

5.1) Guo Jia's contingency:

- This contingency was primarily for Xun Yu's smokescreen attack, not the actual attack. Guo Jia anticipated Xun Yu's smokescreen strategy and he raised a contingency from grave to save his lord, Cao Cao's life.
- Hedong salt department have been infiltrating the Sima clan for years, so as to use them as a means to accomplish objectives as well. As Sima Yi's wife stated, the intention was to hurt the Sima clan by cutting off ties to Cao Cao and his troops to antagonise the two sides.

- When war breaks out, factions from every side would react. There are barbarians west of the pass to attack the enemy and they would need Shanyue from the south to attack. It was, as stated, the art of war to employ.
- Why would they need Shanyue? They were stated to be the kings of Brigands in the Central plains. Shanyue people were 'ghosts' who could move quickly and scale mountains, as well as lay ambushes in thorny bushes. Shanyue people still maintain a sizable prowess in manpower and wealth, despite their vast and divided nature.
- As Sima Yi's wife explained, the infiltration of the Shan clan was not effective. The infiltrator seemed to know about the clan, but they only dug into the Sima clan and supposedly ignored Zhang clan of Liyi. The orchestrators, whom she believed to be court officials, simply ignored the Shanyue organisation as they saw Shanyue rebelling only in the south-east and supposedly believed it was local power. But the supporters of the Shanyue clan were not in the south at all, but were spread to the north.
- Guo Jia foresaw the Liang province revolt and the strategy to annihilate Wei. As Feng Xiao wrote the entire strategy down in Cao Cao's art of war: "Cut off their supply line, guard their return route, and attack their lord."
- Guo Jia used Sima Yi's wife, Zhang Chunhua (need not to be taken out of context) from the forgotten clan to save Cao Cao from death. What does this mean? Well Zhang Chunhua, the wife of Sima Yi, explained that before she fell in love with Sima Yi and married him, she used to be an agent of the Shan clan who was tasked with making investments in the Central plains. After marriage, she changed names to Zhang and joined the Sima clan. So her extract of the clan was entirely forgotten and Guo Jia exploited that loophole.
- Guo Jia used the Shan clan ships in the area to save Cao Cao just in time when he was lured deep into the Liang province's territory, Tong pass region. He also employed Xu Chu as the bodyguard as he foresaw Ma Chao being the main general of the army.
- It's important to note that Xun Yu foresaw Guo Jia's contingency and actually planned far ahead of it as well. But this contingency saved Cao Cao from the chase of the Liang province army.

5.2) Jia Xu's counter-active strategy to Xun Yu's Tong pass strategy:

- The context of this strategy is that Jia Xu completely deduced and broke down Xun Yu's scheme, and came up with a masterful counter-active strategy to neutralise the Liang province revolt and the chaos of Wei.
- Jia Xu also countered Wu from entering the battle, by spreading news that Zhang Liao would be aiding the reinforcements against Wu, keeping Wu isolated

and on their toes. Not that big of a counter though, Xun Yu probably foresaw it too.
- As stated, Jia Xu is a man from Liang province. He was once a strategist of the Liang province and served Dong Zhuo for a period of time, before he left and joined Cao Cao instead. He was known to have vast and incredible knowledge about Liang province. For example, he was able to predict/forecast the factions that would rebel on Liang province's revolt against Wei, he was able to identify that Qiang men would be of great threat to Wei as their proficiency in horsemanship could easily overpower Cao Cao and etc... Jia Xu was able to deduce the orchestrator of the strategy and pierced through all the layers of protections that Xun Yu formulated, and immediately foresaw the inevitable strategy. So Jia Xu himself formulated an insanity of a counter-active strategy, which involved the use of spies as written by him in Cao Cao's art of war.
- Due to the treason Ma Teng was framed for, he was captured by Wei and was locked in Chaoge?? Ma Teng was imprisoned along with his sons, Ma Tie and Ma Xiu. Han Sui's hostages were also present in the place. When Jia Xu entered the scene, he ordered Wang Schlang to identify general Hou Xuan's family as well as Cheng Yin's family who were held as hostages and met Ma Teng as well. Ma Teng confronted Jia Xu on how his son and his oath brother would take over the capital without any difficulty, and that it would be a joke for Cao Cao if he thought he could turn the tides over. Jia Xu (with absolute aura) said that what Ma Teng said is true, Cao Cao's specialty was telling jokes and that if Han Sui laughed at the joke, the tides would turn within five days.
- In September of year 211, Jia Xu's troops arrived in Tong pass. He was able to provide minor relief to Cao Cao's provision shortage, however the situation was no less dire. Amidst all the chaos, no one, not even Sima Yi, was able to understand the situation and all the chaos that was going on, and were entirely clueless about the situation. But only one person truly understood the situation and the chaos, and that was Jia Xu, the third genius of the house of professor Water Mirror. Jia Xu bravely sent a negotiation letter to Han Sui and both agreed to negotiate, and if violence were to happen, it would cause bad consequences. So Ma Chao and Han Sui were expecting Cao Cao to surrender. However, the letter he sent was written by Hou Xuan and other hostages, instead of him, so that Cao Cao could negotiate that he would release the hostages. But there's more to the strategy.
- Jia Xu then continued to explain the levels/types of spies and how to use them, like how he wrote in Cao Cao's art of war. Jia Xu finally executed the counter-active strategy that he had planned for. Cao Cao and Han Sui were

negotiating in peace on Tong pass, with Cao Cao not even wearing a single layer of armor to further lure Han Sui. They were both reminiscing on their childhood and their days in Tong pass, as Jia Xu executed his strategy.
- Jia Xu captured a number of local hostages in his faction to execute the first layer of the strategy. Cao Cao demanded Han Sui to surrender as then Cao Cao would release the hostages. Han Sui laughed at Cao Cao's demands and called him foolish for trying to stoop so low to escape, and that he already considered them dead. But this strategy is far from over. Jia Xu further shielded his strategy by aligning this strategy with the weather Xun Yu planned, misdirecting the opposing faction into thinking Cao Cao's main strategy is to claim negotiation, stall the opposing troops and army, and then force Han Sui and Ma Chao to leave by using the cold winter to isolate them. Ma Chao, who was observing the negotiation, was infuriated by the talk between Cao Cao and Han Sui, and expected Cao Cao to surrender already. How was the first type of spy employed here? Jia Xu employed the first type of spy by employing a messenger between Han Sui and Cao Cao: Hou Xuan's eldest son. I will expand on this later.
- Jia Xu then continued his second layer of the strategy. Cao Cao and Han Sui were discussing the tomb of Emperor Qin, the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. Cao Cao claimed how the structure of the tomb was not very unique and was a simple structure that can be seen all over the world, that a carelessness of a smart person could lead to a rabbit hole of complexity on the tomb. Jia Xu executed one of Ma Chao's men and spread the news about it to Ma Chao's army. What is this analogy here? The death of Ma Chao's hostage was basically juxtaposed with the tomb of Qin. Cao Cao claimed how the tomb of the Emperor of Qin was really just a simple structure that was so unnecessarily overthought by the intellectuals, just like that, the news of the death of the hostage was a threat that could spiral the men of Ma Chao to overthink and theorise about the reason of the death. Jia Xu indirectly planted the seeds of doubt and distrust in Ma Chao and his men, by employing this inner strategy. How did Jia Xu employ the insiders type spies here? Jia Xu employed the tactic by the fake letters that he sent to Han Sui's strategic advisor, planting cues of suspicion and anticipation. I will expand on this too later.
- Jia Xu executed his third layer of the strategy next. Jia Xu, cold-heartedly, planted the murdered hostage's head on the battlefield, to provoke Ma Chao even more. Jia Xu laid the trap of suspicion and distrust in Ma Chao's head, by spreading the news about the death of the hostage he needed. Jia Xu broke the illusion and revealed the truth before Ma Chao. Ma Chao was provoked, but this was the beginning stage of Jia Xu's final trap. Jia Xu has now successfully

hijacked Ma Chao's psyche and also simultaneously has provoked Han Sui's chief advisor. How has Jia Xu employed the third type of spy? We will expand on this later.
- Jia Xu said to Xiahou Dun to kill one hostage per day, and that the next day would be for Ma Tie's execution. Why was Jia Xu massacring the hostages so ruthlessly? Because he was provoking Ma Chao. Not only did Jia Xu murder and plant the heads of the hostages that he killed, he also set all other hostages free. Jia Xu let Han Sui's hostages, Hou Xuan's hostages, Cheng Yin's hostages and several others free, while killing each of Ma Chao's one by one. Jia Xu also sent multiple fabricated letters to Han Sui, but the advisor noted how the letter was very vague and had many mistakes, which a scholarly man like Jia Xu would never commit. So to prevent Ma Chao and his troops from misunderstanding the vague letter, Han Sui's advisor concealed the letter, which Jia Xu anticipated. So by manipulating the advisor into concealing the letter and simultaneously leaking the information that Jia Xu has been sending letters to Han Sui, he logically manipulated Ma Chao's faction into thinking that Han Sui and Cao Cao had colluded. He successfully alienated Ma Chao and Han Sui.
- Now onto Jia Xu's philosophy on espionage that he has incredibly employed in the strategy:
1) Type one spies - Local spies: The local spies are regular types of agents or inhabitants of the enemy, whose only purpose is to work as a double agent and allow information flow to the faction, as described by Sun Tzu. Jia Xu successfully employed this form of spies using one of the hostages to write a letter for him. The hostage, Hou Xuan's eldest son, was the double agent who has allowed information flow between Cao Cao and Han Sui. He used the information flow to plant seeds of suspicion in Ma Chao's and his brothers' head.
2) Type two spies - Insiders: Insiders are the types of agents whose only purpose is to plant false information within the opposing faction instead of just information leakage, they are employed to act within the faction, as described by Sun Tzu. Jia Xu successfully employed this type of spies through the usage of the fake letters that he had sent to Han Sui's chief advisor. The insider, here in question, was Jia Xu himself. He had sent fabricated and vague texts of negotiations and information to Han Sui's chief advisor, which manipulated him to conceal the letter. This contributed to the next level of spies that Jia Xu employed masterfully. Jia Xu constantly also leaked the information that the letter has been set, as a nurturing trap of the strategy. This layer of the strategy was meant to be analogical to Cao Cao's words about the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. The smart person (Han Sui's advisor) overthought about the meaning

and significance of Jia Xu's letter and over-complicated the situations, and fell right into Jia Xu's trap.

3) Type three spies - Surviving agents: Surviving agents are the types of agents who are the final products of usage of spies who accomplish the given missions from the previous spy types, as described by Sun Tzu. But Jia Xu innovated the text, by employing the final type as the third type of spies. Jia Xu killed Ma Chao's necessary hostages, to further provoke him. The surviving agent, here in question, was Han Sui (and his necessary hostages). Han Sui's hostages that Jia Xu has released alive and healthy, was to create a reverse 'Personal Fable Bias' or 'Why only me?!' effect in Ma Chao's psyche. Copy Pasted from google, "The Personal Fable is a belief held by many adolescents telling themselves that they are special and unique, so much so that none of life's difficulties or problems will affect them regardless of their behavior". The reverse Personal Fable Bias is basically the belief that they are the only ones who are suffering from their situations, while all others' problems have been solved [PS. I made that term up. As far as I know, there's no such term as 'Reverse Personal Fable Bias']. This bias was strategized by Jia Xu so that this would be developed into suspicion later.

4) Type four spies - Doomed agents: Doomed agents are the types of agents whose entire purpose to exist is to deceive the opposing faction, as described by Sun Tzu. Jia Xu again successfully employed this type of spy through the execution of Ma Chao's brothers, Ma Tie and Ma Xiu. Jia Xu let off each of Han Sui hostages and brutally killed each of Ma Chao's, and planted each of their heads on the battlefield (This act of a severed head that has been vertically impaled publicly is known as 'Head On a Spike') to provoke him and manipulate him into suspecting Han Sui. As previously mentioned, Jia Xu employed the fake letters exactly for this reason. The fake letters were vague and fabricated, so he logically manipulated the advisor into concealing the letter, which was to indirectly manipulate Ma Chao into suspecting that Cao Cao and Han Sui had formed a coalition between Wei and his troops.

5) Type five spies - The converted agents: The converted spies are the type of agents who are converted from the enemy's faction to theirs and use them for their faction's purposes, as described by Sun Tzu. Jia Xu once again successfully employed this mode of spies as efficiently as possible, but this time the steps were built from the former types of spies. Jia Xu manipulated Ma Chao's and his men's psyche into thinking "Han Sui isn't providing any information about the letters Jia Xu has sent to them. It must be because Han Sui and Cao Cao have negotiated to collude and have formed a coalition between themselves. That must be the reason why Han Sui's hostages were spared by Jia Xu. While mine were brutally

murdered and gibbeted publicly. I must not take any more chances, I must break through Han Sui's and Cao Cao's illusions to defeat me." So the converted agent, in question here, was Ma Chao himself. Jia Xu manipulated Ma Chao into turning against Han Sui and made him do his biddings without any casualties on his side.
- Masterful use of Sun Tzu's wisdom on the usage of spies. Jia Xu weaponised the wisdom of Sun Tzu and even innovated it.
- Why did Jia Xu even do this? Because he wanted to pit Han Sui and Ma Chao against each other, while Wei would suffer no casualties, as well as to cut each of Xun Yu's traps from their roots. Jia Xu turned Ma Chao and Han Sui against each other, and his predictive strategy would be incoming.
- Jia Xu also uprooted Xun Yu's inner strategy to pit the two brothers against each other. How did Jia Xu uproot Xun Yu's trap to pit the two brothers against each other? Jia Xu accomplished this objective by inviting all the main officials to a place. He then organised them to support Cao Pi as the heir to the Wei kingdom. Because he foresaw the possibility that Xun Yu's strategy might involve pitting the two brothers against each other for Wei to self-destruct. So Jia Xu forced Cao Pi to be the heir. This also simultaneously made Han Sui and Ma Chao holding Cao Cao hostage, as their objective was to establish the supremacy of the Liang province. But since the actual emperor was Cao Pi, the significance of Cao Cao's survival was less vital. Effective tactic for the situation.
- Jia Xu framing Cao Pi as the heir of the Wei kingdom, had another purpose as well. It was to lure the reinforcements of Ma Dai away and leave him defenceless. This is a significant move. Because Ma Dai was the one who was guarding the Tong pass region and so without much reinforcements other than the salt gangs to back him up, Cao Cao's Cao Zhen. In September of year 211, the vanguard force from Liang province arrived in Henan with the support of various rebel armies along the way, and they all advanced toward Luoyang. Meanwhile, under Jia Xu's leadership, ten troops were delayed in the Tong pass region due to the peace talk.
- Jia Xu's alienation scheme has begun. Commander Yang Qiu's army was attacking the right side of the pass, while the other armies were leaving their rallying points to come there as well, though the main leader of the troops, Han Sui hasn't given such order to attack the pass yet. The subordinate of Han Sui informed him that it was not from his decision that they were attacking the pass, but from Ma Chao's decision. The Liang province had Cao Cao and his men just where they wanted him to be, but due to Jia Xu's manipulations and schemes, their deployment was a total mess. Hou Xuan and Cheng Yi's troops in Hangu pass were mobilised and Cheng Yi of mountain Shouyang had also left the main encampment of the army. When all of the troops had been lured away to leave the

area undefended, Wei's Xiahou Dun would definitely bypass the line of defence of Ma Dai.
- So Han Sui, who comprehended the serious threats from Xiahou Dun troops, ordered his own troops to stop Ma Chao and the other troops from leaving their posts. In September, Ma Chao's forceful assault, which led to Han Sui's blockage, led to heavy casualties on both sides. Cao Cao lost Dou Fu, while the Liang province coalition lost Cheng Yi and Liang Xing's armies. It was stated that the losing side of the Tong pass has only one place to flee to, and that there would be another tens of thousand to enter the Chuan region. Soon the remaining of Ma Chao's troops started to retreat and Han Sui tried to stop an enraged Ma Chao from ruining the situation. Ma Chao then used his brother to subdue Han Sui and threatened to kill him, unless he got to kill Cao Cao. But eventually Han Sui gave up and gave away all his forces and influences to Ma Chao to prove his paternal love for him, and warned him to stay away from the Eight genius. Jia Xu has manipulated the two factions so proficiently and engineered their conflict to end in the way he desired.
- Jia Xu anticipated Sima Yi's Ruan clan infiltration plan, which can be inferred from the fact that Sima Yi informed the court officials that he appeared under the order of advisor Jia Xu. The purpose of this anticipation is to add another layer to his counter-strategy. Which is to cut off the supply line of Liang province. So if the supply line of Liang province were to be blocked as the infiltration plan of Sima Yi would have exposed all the court officials as well as would have blocked the Hedong salt department's influence, Jia Xu anticipated all of this in his counter-strategy. Now both Wei and Liang province were in equal conditions, except the Liang province would also be disconnected and isolated from each other, combined with the fact that the winter would have made the soldiers' morale go down.
- To summarise Sima Yi's improvisation, from Xun Yu's words: Colluding with the Shanyue, infiltrating the court officials and helping the warlords west of the pass to overthrow the Han dynasty. Other improvisation includes: fabricating rumors that general secretariat Xun Yu has confessed to all the conspirators of the situations in exchange for leniency and adding some people to the list who might cause trouble for him. Not very sure if Jia Xu anticipated the latter portion of Sima Yi's plan, but he definitely anticipated Sima Yi's former portion of the plan. This prediction was covered by Jia Xu's strategy. By using Sima Yi and his infiltration plan, he indirectly cut off Liang province's supply line while the entire unity of the province went disarray, so as to force them and Ma Chao to retreat in a few months.

- The fighting at Tong pass went for months, until Han Sui eventually retreated away due to the cold winter which starved and demoralised his troops. Zhang He joined Xu Huang in the pursuit, while Zhang-er decided to take on Yang Qiu. And once Cao Cao's reinforcement would have arrived, the unity of the coalition of the Liang province would be no more. Yu Jin would also finish the aftermath of the battle. And finally the Battle Of Tong Pass has ended, with all the warlords of the Liang province surrendering, the internal chaos neutralised, the supply line of Wei re-established, the traitors identified and Cao Cao and his men safeguarded.
- Absolutely brilliant counter-active strategy that Jia Xu extensively planned for. He neutralised every problem Xun Yu planned with extreme precision. This strategy legit gave me goosebumps, because Xun Yu was entirely in control prior to Jia Xu and when Jia Xu entered the scene, he proved why Xun Yu needed to shield his innocence.

6) Xun Yu's ultimate move in the Shu entry extracts:

- This is the portion that covers the strategy Xun Yu employed in the last arc.
- A rather small summary of Xun Yu's final ultimate move.
- But if you haven't noticed yet, my emotional engagement went up my cheeks and I just gave up on a long summary.

6.1) "So what now? Now that they neutralised Xun Yu's Tong pass strategy. What were Wei's further plans with Xun Yu?"

- Sima Yi, Jia Xu, Cao Cao and all of Wei understood Xun Yu's sheer strategic prowess.
- Being able to crush Cao from every side, all while maintaining the facade of innocence.
- So all of them come up with their own strategy.
- All of them plan to launch a festival or sort to invite all the important people as well as form a large crowd in the area. Why did they do this? So as to assassinate Xun Yu without any interrupting or finding them out.
- They planned Liao, the mute assassin of the new generations of the Handicapped warriors, to assassinate Xun Yu as he was known to be the most proficient assassin of the group, who was known to have fought Wu's late general-in-chief, Zhou Yu.
- They also planned to employ Diao Chan (who was known to have the ability to enchant the minds of the audience) to distract the crowds while they took out Xun Yu.

- Xun Yu also has to attend the festival, because if he were to deny the offer, it would arouse suspicion and turn people against him. And could leverage on this to eliminate him. Contingency!
- Sounds like a good and simple plan, huh?

6.2) "Wait, why would Xun Yu come? Can't he just suspect a trap and evade it? Pretty easy."

- No. This was Xun Yu's plan all along.
- Xun Yu's actual strategy is to lure the entire faction to strategize this plan.
- Xun Yu's strategy never expected the Tong pass strategy to have 100% success rate, so he aligned that strategy with another unimaginable move that Wei faction nor Feng Xiao could foresee, a move that no one can counter.
- I think he actually foresaw this exact strategy of the faction, because there was a festival coming in that period of time. So Xun Yu was able to foresaw what they would attempt to do, after he proved himself to be a threat.
- Xun Yu knew Cao faction would try to assassinate him, because the very act of him shielding his innocence is not just shielding his innocence on the surface level to avoid execution, but to instigate the faction into trying to follow an underhanded technique such as assassination to take him out.
- Xun Yu also used several insider agents to harmonize his strategy. I think he used these agents to clear out any suspicions that Xun Yu could know their strategy. It is also to monitor their movements and sort.
- Xun Yu also knew Diao Chan would be invited. In fact, I theorise Xun Yu actually recruited Diao Chan and intentionally positioned her in a situation like this to lure them to choose her as she is a very reputable dancer. However, I am not going to credit this theory as true anyways.
- Xun Yu, further shielded his strategy from getting interrupted, by planting several 'attackers' of his who appear to be attacking him, but in truth, they are disallowing Wei from using their own forces to attack Xun Yu. Protecting him completely!
- So by using Diao Chan's dancing prowess to enchant the audience and throw them into a deep sense of home and lost self, Xun Yu finally unleashes his final move!
- Xun Yu enters the stage and gives his ideas, unleashing it inside the enchanted audience who absorbs his words as he utters them out.
- This was a complete replication of Dong Zhuo's tactic, except this is layered in several ways.
- Jia Xu was the only one (not Sima Yi, cuz he virtually had no premises to deduce this unimaginable of a move) to connect the dots and finally figure out Xun Yu's most deadly and final move.

- This move basically explains all the threads of strategy Xun Yu used.
- The elimination of evidence shielding, spewing immense chaos within Wei all while dealing with Ma Faction and supply lines. This was merely to intimidate Wei into choosing the festival as an underhanded tactic to assassinate Xun Yu.
- The shielding to eliminate any evidence that he is the one who is orchestrating the schemes in the background was actually to force Wei to commit an underhanded action. Think about it, Xun Yu very obviously knew Jia Xu and Zhuge Liang would know that Xun Yu used to be a very sneaky individual who is very experienced in concealment.
- So he aligned the very background information of his childhood to lure Jia Xu into reasoning it out. Why would he do that? Wouldn't that just allow Jia Xu to frame him? No. Obviously no one would take something as silly as stealing watermelons in childhood and concealing it as valid proof to frame him. But Xun Yu knows that this amount of information is enough for Jia Xu to reason out who is the orchestrator all along. Xun Yu WANTED Jia Xu to reason it out...
- Because the next sequence of demolishing moves from his manipulation of Ma faction and internal faction of Wei would intimidate Wei kingdom incredibly. I mean it failed due to Guo Jia's contingency and Jia Xu's counteractive strategy. But Xun Yu never desired it to succeed, I mean if it succeeded, that's just an easy win for Xun Yu. But Xun Yu prepared his next set of unimaginable moves, because even if this move doesn't destroy Cao Cao, his next set of moves definitely would.
- Think about it... Why would Xun Yu execute his strategy now??? Can't he just execute it before the Nan Departure period or something? Why would he execute specifically at that period of time? Because he saw an opportunity in the incoming festival. Festival???? Yes, festival, Xun Yu was able to recognise the incoming festival as a move to leverage upon. Because he knew the very act of him shielding his innocence would manipulate the faction into using underhanded methods such as assassination to take him out.
- Xun Yu manipulated the circumstances of repeated death-threats and killer moves to manipulate the faction's thought process into thinking "Xun Yu has successfully shielded his innocence, even though he is the bastard who orchestrated these lines of events. He shielded his innocence, by staying active within the faction around everyone and even after being demoted, allowed himself to be monitored, to disallow any framings that he is the thorn who is manipulating everything from the background. By this move, he has disallowed any of our moves to execute him or we have to suffer severe backlash or even revolts from people. Xun Yu also has proved himself to be a formidable threat, he was able to manipulate both the internal faction to inject chaos as well as use Ma faction to attack our troops and kingdom. We were just a step away from completely crumbling if not for Fengxiao's contingency. So we

have to get rid of him, but not directly. There's a festival incoming, meaning there will be a celebration of it. We can form large crowds and occasions to distract the people from knowing Xun Yu is killed by us. We will also use Lady Diaochan to enchant and immerse the audience as we eliminate Xun Yu from the game."
- So the use of an unimaginably large crowd tactic as an underhanded method to take him out while nobody is observing was Xun Yu's actual trap to spread his words and ideas deeply into the hearts of as many people as possible.
- Which was Xun Yu's ultimate move after all! With this move, he has planted all the seeds of destruction within all the crowds, he is compared to a farmer who is expecting a harvest. Because the seeds of his ideas will soon harvest into something destructive.
- Because Xun Yu understood holding back Wei for a short period of time is no use, they are still by far the strongest. So by planting all the destruction into its people, the long term destruction of Wei has been planted and Xun Yu already foresaw a harvest for it.
- Because the long term effect of the ideas would be destructive. A simple questioning or turn over would cause the internal and the external aspects of Wei's structure to completely collapse.
- Unimaginable strategy!

7) Ranking the strategy categories from the best to the worst in my opinion:

1. Strategy Alignment
2. Strategy Complexity
3. Strategy Shielding
4. Strategy Effectiveness
5. Strategy Building
6. Strategy Foresight
7. Strategy Execution
8. Strategy Efficiency
9. Strategy Resilience
10. Strategy Adaptability

Thanks for reading :3

"Eat melons in the seventh month, cut gourds in the eighth, see the tip of the autumn fur by the ninth."