

Defeated by his own fear

Long, long time ago China was not a big united country. Instead, it was composed of three smaller countries. The three countries were always fighting with each other.

Among the three countries, Shu was the weakest but was fortunately headed by a very wise man, Zhuge Liang. In fact, Zhuge Liang was regarded as one of the wisest men in China.

One day, General Sima Yi from the country Wei led hundred thousands of soldiers coming to attack Shu. Master Zhuge knew this would happen sooner or later and had a ready plan to defend his country. He called in General Ma and told him about his plan.

But General Ma was a very arrogant man. He said to himself: "Why should I follow Zhuge's plan? If I defeat Sima Yi's army in my own way, everybody will see that I am smarter than Zhuge." So he led his men to fight in his own way. So he lost, badly. Only a handful of men managed to escape and reported the bad news to Master Zhuge.

Upon this shocking bad news, Master Zhuge only lost his composure for a minute. He had to think out something fast or the whole city and his whole country would be smashed. There were only two thousand soldiers in the city. But Master Zhuge sent them all but twenty to wait in the steep mountains of a valley. People in the city were instructed to stay in their houses and nobody should come out to walk in the streets. Master Zhuge then ordered the twenty soldiers to remove all the war flags and weapons from the city walls and open as widely as possible the gate to the city. He then asked the twenty soldiers to take off their army uniforms and changed into street sweepers' clothes. While the twenty men were calmly sprinkling water and sweeping the streets, Master Zhuge came to the wall above the gate with his favorite Qin, an ancient Chinese music instrument.

When General Sima's army came near to the city, he sent his son and a group of soldiers to spy on their enemy. Shortly his son and his men returned. They reported that they didn't see any sign of the enemy army, only a widely open gate, some street swipers and an old man playing peaceful music on the wall.

General Sima then went closer to the city wall with his son. He could recognize the old man. He told his son: "That's not an ordinary old man. He is Master Zhuge himself!"

His son asked: "Should we ride into the city and seize him?" Looking at the open gate and the calm street sweepers for a moment, General Sima said: "Let's withdraw!" "But why?" asked his son. General Sima said: "Master Zhuge must have set up a trap in the city for us and he is just using the open gate and himself to entice us to jump into the trap."

So General Sima's army turned back and marched away from the city. When they came to the valley, Zhuge Liang's two thousand soldiers were waiting for them. This

sudden attack made General Sima even surer that Zhuge Liang also had a trap in the city.

After General Sima's army left, Master Zhuge came down from the wall. Somebody asked Master Zhuge why General Sima did not come into the city. Another asked: "Master Zhuge, did you find a secret weapon to defeat the enemy while we were hiding?" To that, Master Zhuge laughed and answered: " Yes we used a secret weapon. Our secret weapon was our enemy's own fear."

空城计

很久以前，中国由三个小国家组成，这三个国家分别是魏，蜀，吴。这三个国家长年交战，每个国家都想把别的国家消灭掉。这三个国家中蜀国最弱，幸好蜀国的军师是诸葛亮，他是中国历史上最聪明最睿智的人之一。

有一天，魏国的大将军司马懿带领大军 15 万来打蜀国。诸葛亮让马谡带兵驻守在一个叫街亭的险要的地方，并在三叮嘱街亭的重要性，还为他设计了退敌的方案。马谡是一个非常骄傲自满的人，他想如果我能够用我自己的办法打败敌人，以后人们都会说我比诸葛亮还聪明。诸葛亮的让他在大路上设障碍拦截魏军，可是他却把大营设在山上。魏军围住了山，并且断了他们的水源。很快蜀军就被打的几乎全军覆没。司马懿的大军直扑诸葛亮所在的西城而来。当时，诸葛视身边没有大将，只有一班文官，所带领的五千军队，也有一半运粮草去了，只剩 2500 名士兵在城里。众人听到司马懿带兵前来的消息都大惊失色。诸葛亮登城楼观望后，对众人说：“大家不要惊慌，我略用计策，便可教司马懿退兵。”

于是，诸葛亮传令，把所有的旌旗都藏起来，两千多士兵悄悄出城埋伏在一个峡谷的山上。只留下 20 个士兵脱下战袍，扮成百姓模样，洒水扫街。百姓都在家里藏好，不准出门到街上走动。又教士兵把四个城门全部打开，诸葛亮自己披上鹤氅，戴上高高的纶巾，领着两个小书童，带上一张琴，到城上望敌楼前凭栏坐下，燃起香，然后慢慢弹起琴来。

司马懿儿子领着的先头部队到达城下，见了这种气势，不敢轻易入城，便急忙返回报告司马懿。司马懿听后心里很奇怪，跟着儿子飞马来到城下观看。离城不远，他果然看见城门洞开，20 多个百姓模样的人在低头洒扫，旁若无人。一老者端坐在城楼上，笑容可掬，正在焚香弹琴。左面一个书童，手捧宝剑；右面也有一个书童，手里拿着拂尘。司马懿看指着那个老者说：“那可不是个普通的老人，他就是诸葛亮本人！”他儿子说：“那我们冲进城去抓住诸葛亮，并踏平这座城市。”不料司马懿却命令道：“不，我们退兵！”司马懿对儿子解释说：“诸葛亮一生谨慎，不曾冒险。现在城门大开，里面必有埋伏，我军如果进去，正好中了他们的计。还是快快撤退吧！”于是各路兵马都退了回去。经过峡谷时，诸葛亮的两千多伏兵突然杀出，杀死了不少魏国士兵。司马懿更加相信诸葛亮在城里也设有埋伏。

司马懿的人走后，诸葛亮从城楼上下来。有人问为什么司马懿没有入城，另外有个人问：“您是不是有什么秘密武器？我们藏起来的时候，您是不是招来了天龙帮忙？”诸葛亮笑着说：“我是有秘密武器，那就是敌人自己的恐惧感。”