

Civilization 118

Chapter 118 Poet

The army marched westward, and the Otomi people retreated one after another. Three days later, when Xiulote arrived at the third mountain campsite, what lay before him was a bustling work site.

Kuluka had already taken control of the campsite and was directing the warriors to repair the damaged fences. The Otomi people had hurriedly evacuated upon seeing the vanguard of the warrior group from a distance, setting fire to the campsite before they left.

Kuluka didn't go after the fleeing militia. He arranged for the warriors to quickly extinguish the fire and then made simple repairs to the damaged fences. Everything was orderly, a testament to his experience with construction. Of course, the fire was quickly put out mostly because there was really nothing much to burn in the campsite.

"Priest Commander-in-Chief, by the time we reached the campsite, it was completely empty; nothing was left. We couldn't even find a moldy cornbread! In this situation, even the warehouse rats would starve and weep."

Kuluka chuckled bitterly; he was amazed at the Otomi people's scavenging abilities.

"No, there wouldn't be any rats in the warehouse." Xiulote looked around the warehouse and made a joke. "Because the Otomi people would have caught them to eat!"

The more the young man saw, the more certain he became that the Otomi people were in their most difficult moments. Hunger was tormenting them every second, at least for the Otomi militia that was certainly the case.

After a brief inspection of the campsite, Xiulote commanded Kuluka's vanguard to stop their work and rest. Especially the thousand warriors led by Balda needed to conserve their energy and be ready for a sudden combat assault.

After a moment's thought, the young man still decided to send out two hundred precious Holy City Jaguar Warriors as forest scouts and spearheads. In military operations, the primary task was to clear the fog of war and understand the enemy's information. Scouting military intelligence was of utmost importance and required the deployment of the most elite troops.

He instructed these elite battle groups to be cautious and watch over each other in teams of ten. Their priority was their own safety, then to investigate the intelligence of the second campsite, and finally to search the forest for the scattered three thousand City-State Warriors.

Then, Olosh led the warriors of Teotihuacan to make simple repairs to the outermost fences of the campsite. Once Bertade's rear army caught up, Xiulote immediately sent the four thousand vanguard troops on their way.

The young man handed the complicated follow-up tasks to the experienced Head Warrior, telling him to continue repairing the campsite, search for the whereabouts of the allies, arrange for Begire's militia, store food, and establish a supply route.

Afterward, Commander-in-Chief Xiulote, with more than six hundred of his personal guard and Olosh's three thousand central troops, closely followed the vanguard toward the second campsite.

The central army marched westward for two days, gathering military intelligence like water along the way. Scouts found traces of large groups of Otomi people. Two thousand Otomi Warriors and four thousand militia were surrounding them, and the second western campsite was still holding out, with an unknown number of troops inside.

Xiulote then took back command of the vanguard, ordering the warriors to quickly tighten their formation and march in secret. As the sun climbed to its zenith and its bright light once again illuminated the forest trail, he heard the clear cry of an eagle again. Olosh translated, "Enemy to the west, less than half a day's distance, specific actions unknown."

Xiulote hesitated no more. With the advantage in troop numbers in his hand, there was no reason to fight a confused night battle. He immediately summoned Balda.

"Your thousand warriors are to unload all their marching gear and rest for a quarter of an hour, then quickly strike westward. The Jaguar Warriors will guide you. Do not linger, disregard the rabble, and stick to the enemy's warrior camp! Kuluka's three thousand will follow shortly."

"Balda, you are a brave Mexica warrior; don't disappoint me!" Xiulote gazed sternly into Balda's eyes and firmly grasped his hand.

With a flushed face, Balda knelt on one knee, letting the young man tower over him as he lowered his head and loudly agreed.

After a quarter of an hour, Balda, bearing his Battle Shield and club, led a thousand assault warriors on their mission, with Kuluka's three thousand warriors closely following behind.

Xiulote was certain the Otomi people had already learned of the army's westward advance—like rabbits prepared for action, they would bolt into the forest at the slightest disturbance.

A thousand-strong assault team could be hidden to the greatest extent in the forest, approach close enough, launch the charge, and hold off the enemy's warriors. Once the following three thousand warriors arrived, the opponents would be left with the choice to die fighting or surrender.

Olosh looked at Xiulote and smiled contentedly. Moments later, the central army's three thousand warriors took the vanguard's marching rations and supplies, fully armed, and headed west as well.

By evening, half a day later, as the sun slightly tilted westward, cooking smoke rose not far away—the Otomi people were starting a fire to prepare food. As was customary, the two thousand warriors gathered on the safer inner side, while the four thousand militia were scattered on the outskirts. The occasional loud cry of an eagle sounded in the woods; the militia outside looked up at the sky, seeing nothing.

The militia had no mood to observe carefully; after all, there were some scouts stationed on the outskirts. They were worried about their daily rations. As the Mexica campsite opposite was short of food, so were the Otomi people.

Having besieged the campsite for two weeks, the nearby wild fruits, vegetables, rodents, and insects had all been dug up and scrounged clean by the militia. Now they could only endure hardship daily, waiting for the noble warriors to provide them with some coarse grains, which they would boil with tree leaves into a thin porridge to barely sustain them.

Under the command of the Otomi Warriors, the militia had launched several attacks, each being repulsed by the three hundred Mexica warriors along with several thousand militia from the campsite.

The attacks resulted in significant casualties with little effect. After some probing and debate, the Otomi Warriors ultimately did not personally join the fight. Instead, they simply sealed off the campsite, waiting for the Mexica to break out.