

## Civilization 120

### Chapter 120 Poet\_3

Balamo sighed in resignation. His poem was not yet finished, but his melancholy mood vanished in an instant, his inspiration gone. He could only wave his war club to the west, and the three hundred samurai bit down on the Otomi's retreating tail, in hot pursuit.

No one paid attention to the Otomi militia for the moment. These conscripted village warriors glanced at one another and then scattered in all directions, fleeing tumultuously. As they left, the militia didn't forget to take as much food from the camp as possible. Next, they would certainly not return to the western army but instead embarked on the long journey home, seeking family members whose fates were unknown. If, by fortune, they found their loved ones, they could begin to consider how to survive the famine-stricken winter.

The Mexica militia didn't pursue the fleeing Otomi militia either. They formed small groups with their primitive stone spears, attempting to capture any living Otomi warriors in armor. Capturing a true warrior would earn the militia food and cotton rewards. If they were strong and brave enough, they even had the chance to be promoted to the most basic rank of young warriors, opening the way to climb the social ladder. This was the only chance for Mexica peasants to change their fate!

When Kuluka's three thousand elite samurai joined the battle, the initially retreating one thousand Otomi warriors quickly collapsed. Their tight formations dispersed and were engulfed in the tide of Mexica warriors in an instant. The other thousand Otomi warriors, who were retreating in an orderly manner, no longer hesitated. They abandoned the two hundred at the rear engaged by Balamo, dropped their heavy war clubs and wooden shields, and vanished quickly into the forests with only their short blades.

The brilliant twilight illuminated the final struggle on the battlefield. Soon, darkness took away the sun's afterglow, as well as the martial prowess of the world. The vanguard samurai lit bonfires, opened the gates of the camp, and welcomed the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief of the central army.

Xiulote approached with his helmet, facing the welcoming generals with a serene expression.

Kuluka knelt on one knee respectfully, "Honorable Priest Commander-in-Chief, under your command, we have achieved a splendid victory, leaving behind twelve hundred Otomi warriors, including more than nine hundred captives! Additionally, we have captured over six hundred Otomi militia. Our forces have lost approximately one hundred and fifty warriors, and about three to four hundred have been injured," he reported.

Xiulote unfolded a smile, pleased with the outcome of the battle. He patted Kuluka on the shoulder affectionately and then lifted him up with both hands from the ground.

Standing up, Kuluka bowed his head respectfully and continued to report, "Priest Commander-in-Chief, I have just inspected the rations of the Otomi warriors. They are subsisting on sweet potatoes and pumpkins that lead to quick hunger, it seems they no longer have corn cakes to eat."

Xiulote nodded, as he had expected. He commended Kuluka with "Truly attentive!" and then looked towards Balda.

Balda stood tall and proud. He had made five or six charges during the battle and acquired seven or eight minor wounds. He undertook the most difficult tasks, bore the heaviest casualties, and achieved the greatest victory. Under his assaults, the Otomi were constantly scattered, fighting individually, unable to establish effective command or maintain organized formations for advance or retreat.

Xiulote laughed heartily. Recalling the heroic tales of memory, he loudly praised, "Balda, you are a true samurai, the courage of our Mexica people!"

The young man then approached, took Balda's hand, and presented him with an Obsidian Dagger inlaid with gemstones. As it happened, this dagger was one of the extra gifts given to him by the Otomi Envoys during the siege of Xilotepec. Now, it was fitting to bestow it upon Balda.

Balda accepted the gift joyfully and formally saluted Xiulote. Then he unabashedly clipped the exquisite dagger to his waist and showed it off to everyone.

Xiulote smiled slightly and continued to gaze at the kneeling Balamo.

"You are the Warrior Captain of the camp? What is the situation there?"

"Yes! Honorable Commander-in-Chief, I am Balamo, Warrior Captain of the camp, ready to serve you! In the camp, we currently have three hundred samurai, nearly three thousand militia, and food for three thousand people for five days," he answered.

Balamo raised his head, revealing a lean and handsome face.

It seemed the camp was indeed on the verge of exhausting its food supply. Without reinforcements, these warriors and militia would all perish here.

"Balamo, do you have news from the First Camp Casal?"

"The Otomi's blockade has been too stringent, but judging from the intensity of their attacks on our camp, Commander Casal is still holding on. Three weeks ago, he gathered food from the Second Camp and should be able to hold out for another ten days!"

Xiulote nodded in approval. Skilled in numbers and knowledgeable of military affairs, a fine talent indeed. Then he scrutinized the warrior before him, who, although in full armor and armed, seemed to exude the air of a poet.

"You have earned merit for timely leaving the camp and engaging the Otomi warrior battalion! Is there anything you desire?"

Balamo's eyes shone, flickering with intelligence. He observed Xiulote's priestly garments, the youth's stature, the beast helmet covering his face, and the reverent demeanor of the surrounding generals before glancing at the samurai legions arriving in succession behind.

"I am a commoner samurai without a surname. Please, Commander, grant me one!"

Xiulote's expression remained calm, yet he was inwardly taken aback. He took another look at Balamo's melancholic eyes, noting that such a poet's temperament was quite special in a samurai. This samurai was quick-witted and decisive, suitable to be kept close for observation.

"You said your name is Balamo? A bleak highland without trees?"

"Yes! Commander, your erudition is evident," Balamo responded.

The young man pondered for a moment, the memories of the past surfacing in his mind. After standing silent for a while, he said sentimentally,

"Your surname shall be Luerfu, a true Mexica poet!"