

Civilization 125

Chapter 125 The Divine Tree and the Golden Eagle_3

"I cradled my heavy heart, solemn and dignified. Grief piled like a mountain within me, shrouded in darkness. I waited for a breeze to rekindle the ashes of the dead. Ah, that would be my carefree love!"

Not far away, Xiulote smiled gently. It seemed the burden was still not heavy enough.

The legion halted briefly and then continued on its journey. Three days later, when Xiulote saw Xilotepec City again, the rebellious Otomi City-State had already been completely besieged. The City-State was blockaded on all sides by camps, and supplies of water, food, salt, and timber were utterly cut off. Tens of thousands of Mexica Samurai patrolled between the camps, preventing even a wild rabbit from crossing the tight defences.

Xiulote was somewhat surprised to see over forty thousand Mexica Samurai had gathered here. It had been more than twenty days back and forth; had Aweit not moved south yet?

After a moment's thought, the youth handed the legion over to Bertade for arranging. Then, under the guard of the escort, he hurriedly came to the riverside camp carrying the wooden box from the Eagle's Nest. He saw the huge fleet gathered at the river and the grain transport ships coming and going; had the food supply been restored once again?

With a belly full of questions, Xiulote headed straight to the royal tent in the center of the camp. The camp was solemn, but there was an indescribable strange atmosphere. On his way, the Samurai seemed to have good morale, but the Great Nobility he occasionally met had flickering eyes, and so did the City-State leaders with similarly wandering gazes.

This atmosphere was nothing like the united front at the banquet after Tizoc's death, but rather like the tense calm before a storm.

Upon reaching the royal tent, Xiulote threw open the flap, only to find it completely empty. The fire had long since gone cold, perhaps it hadn't been lit at all that day. Then he continued to search until he found Aweit in a residential cabin.

Aweit was not in his majestic Kingly attire but wore a loose white robe, which made him look rather young. He leaned against the wooden wall behind him, holding a wooden plank on which Xiulote had casually written. He was reading it slowly and carefully.

Xiulote, anxious, snatched the wooden plank from his friend's hands and glanced at the Chinese characters. The first line began with "King Wu attacked Zhou," and naturally, it was followed by "Duke Zhou assisting the governance." The next line was the young man's random continuation, from the short poem "Duke Zhou feeds the people, the world unites."

Aweit looked up, regarding the youth with a gentle gaze that carried a sorrowful smile, "Xiulote, you're back? How did the negotiations with the Otomi go?"

Xiulote respectfully performed a ritual gesture, then asked anxiously, "Aweit, hadn't you decided to quickly head south to the Capital City to officially inherit the throne as King? Why haven't you departed yet?"

Aweit gave a bitter smile. He spread his hands in resignation and shook his head, "What can I do? Two weeks ago, we received intelligence. That old man Quetzal actually summoned the great Xiwakowatle, protector of four generations of Mexica Eagles, the towering Divine Tree who after many years of illness had retreated from public view, the immortal sun of the Mexica, my eighty-five-year-old granduncle, Trakel Er!"

"What! The immortal sun, Trakel Er is still alive?" The youth was incomparably shocked, then felt a sense of solemnity in his heart.

Perhaps in this world, there really are signs of fate, and all things are mysteriously interconnected. If so, then Trakel Er was like that Divine Tree by the river, silently standing in the Empire's past. Compared to him, Xiulote and Aweit were just fledgling eaglets under the shelter of the Divine Tree, not yet the sovereigns of the skies!

The two paused in silence. Meanwhile, the small Ahuehuete in the wooden box behind the youth was just stirred awake by the exclamations. It poked its head out, looking at the two, emitting a series of soft chirps. Its feathers were not yet full, but its heart soared with the desire to fly.