

Aztec Civilization: Destiny to Conquer America!

Chapter 16: Chapter 16: Passing Through

"Honorable newly appointed Mexica Tlatohuani," said a Priest of Xilotepec City, holding a staff within the tent surrounded by curtains. "Descendants of the Primordial God, the God of Day and Night, Ometeotl, greet you."

Xiulote stood on the left side of the Priesthood inside the tent, curiously examining the attire of the Xilotepec envoy — a mix of black and white stripes reminiscent of a wild animal from his homeland twenty thousand li away — the national treasure, the giant panda.

To the right in the tent stood a group of commanders draped in Sun Stone capes; the man painted with a "serpent woman" on his back was the leader. Aweit stood at the back of the commanders' group, wearing a sincere smile.

In the center of the tent sat the King, adorned in a splendid red and white battle robe, his head topped with a skull helm. The King sat high on a platform, maintaining the majesty of a god. He had no intention of descending to perform sacred rites but instead gazed coldly at the envoy.

"Respected King," the Priest envoy bowed his head, his tone all the more respectful. "Xilotepec has always timely paid tribute to you and the great Alliance, and the City Lord has married a noblewoman from Mexica. We are loyal subjects of the great Alliance. I'm unaware of why His Majesty would march to war against us."

The King softly gestured to the Priesthood to continue maintaining his mythical posture.

Before Xiulote, an elderly Priest in a Sun Cape stepped forward: "Xilotepec is guilty of three crimes. First, the quantity of last year's tribute did not meet the requirements of the Alliance. Second, they secretly allied with the Otomi City-States to the west, harboring ill intentions. Third, they worship the old gods." When mentioning the third point, the elderly Priest looked sharply at the envoy.

The envoy maintained his bowed posture until he heard the third charge, at which point he lifted his head, his face showing a shocked expression.

The Priest continued: "The great Descendants of the Sun God demand that Xilotepec City-State surrender ten years' worth of tribute, sacrifices of three thousand men, annul alliances with the Otomi City-States. Hand over the Ritual Plates used for ceremonies and record-keeping in the temples, and convert to the worship of the great Sun God, War God Huitzilopochtli."

"Surrender the Ritual Plates and convert? These are unacceptable terms!" the Priest envoy shouted, clearly losing his composure. "The great Primordial God watches over us, the City-State boasts one hundred thousand warriors, three years of food supplies, and fortifications as solid and indestructible as mountain-top Divine Stones."

The King gestured again to the officers. Xiulote saw that the stony-faced leader stepped forward: "Then we will besiege the city for three years! The Tampen River will continue to bring us provisions, and reinforcements from the Alliance are continuously arriving. We can stay here for ten years!"

"Moreover, you have only twenty thousand warriors and a year's worth of food supplies," the stony man coldly spat out the harsh truth, "After a year, from Descendants to slaves, every male in the city will be sacrificed."

The envoy's expression froze, and silence filled the tent for a moment.

"Tributes, sacrifices, Ritual Plates, conversion." King Tizoc spoke for the first time, "Go back and relate to the Divine Descendants of your City-State that they have only one chance."

The envoy from Xilotepec could only leave silently.

After the envoy departed, the solemn atmosphere in the tent lightened somewhat. Tizoc relaxed his divine posture and asked Ahuizotl with a smile, "My dear brother, what's the news from the Otomi to the far west?"

Ahuizotl approached, his face becoming serious as he answered, "Respected King, according to intelligence gathered by our merchants, the Otomi are mobilizing. The nearby Otapan has mustered forty thousand people, with only ten thousand City-State Warriors. The more distant Guamare and Pamus each mobilized twenty thousand people, with each City-State Warrior numbering eight thousand."

Tizoc nodded, then asked the stony cold man beside him with a smile, "My loyal Chief Commander Totec, how goes the preparation of the legion?"

The stern Totec finally revealed a slight smile, responding, "If Otapan's people rush to their aid, we will surprise them on the road." The other commanders also displayed understanding smiles.

After concluding the military discussion, Tizoc finally found time to notice a corner of the tent.

"Xiulote." He beckoned, smiling and inviting Xiulote over.

"I just heard from Ahuizotl about your plan to build a large wooden trebuchet?"

"It's a trebuchet."

Tizoc frowned slightly and muttered "Oh," not questioning what a 'trebuchet' was, as it seemed trivial to him.

"You say the sun is a giant fireball?" Tizoc went back to the main topic.

"Yes, the Sun is a giant fireball, much larger than the Earth and very far from us," Xiulote answered earnestly.

"Where does the Sun God reside?" Tizoc asked sternly, looking into Xiulote's eyes.

"This... it should be on the Sun," Xiulote cautiously weighed his words, not daring to debate the existence of gods, especially when the theologian was none other than the supreme Divine King.

"You say the earth is a giant ball of dirt?" Tizoc pressed on.

"Yes."

"Then where does the Earth Mother Goddess dwell?"

"...She should be at the center of the giant ball of dirt."

"Come, Xiulote, spin around in your place a few times."

Xiulote was baffled for a moment before obediently spinning a few times.

"Do you feel dizzy?" the King asked with a smile.

"Dizzy," Xiulote innocently replied.

"So, you say the earth is constantly spinning?" the King chuckled, "Then why don't we usually feel dizzy?"

Xiulote was at a loss for words.

He wanted to talk about the concept of relative velocity, but soon realized it was futile and irrelevant. In the end, he could only stammer.

The King seemed very pleased. He appeared to have shed some hidden worries and concerns and no longer scrutinized the youth with piercing eyes.

He gestured with his hand, beckoning the Tengu-clad Xiulote to come closer and step onto the platform. For the first time, he affectionately pinched Xiulote's face with his hand. Hmm, it hurt a little.

"You child," the King chuckled, "since you are to follow the path of a Priest, you must study astronomy and theology seriously. At least attain half of your grandfather's expertise."

"After all, your grandfather has already told me that you will eventually succeed him as the High Priest of Teotihuacan. Initially, I planned to marry a Princess to you, but alas, a Priest cannot have an official wife."

"Ahuizotl, my brother," the King signaled to the military officers, and Ahuizotl quickly mounted the high platform, bowing his head in respect to the King.

"The Teotihuacan lineage is also a direct bloodline of the Sun God, closely related to us in Tenochtitlan. You should treat Xiulote as your own nephew, and in this upcoming campaign, let Xiulote stay by your side. Teach him the basics of war and military."

"You should devote more time to Xiulote. As for the intelligence and guard squad you handle, let the Chief Commander Totec take over temporarily."

"Yes," Ahuizotl's face showed frank respect and obedience, with no trace of dissatisfaction.

"Xiulote, the Teotihuacan City-State has always been the most loyal supporter of the Royal Family. You must loyally obey the next Mexica Tlatohuani," Tizoc said with a smile, talking to Xiulote but his gaze stayed fixed on Ahuizotl's face.

When mentioning the "next Mexica Tlatohuani", he scrutinized every slight expression change on Ahuizotl's face. "Just like your grandfather did with me."

"I will heed your teachings," Xiulote dared not lose focus at this moment.

"Good. You may leave now."

They had walked far from the big tent, so far that the sun on the horizon began to set. The glaring sunlight finally moved away from the land.

"Congratulations," Ahuizotl said to Xiulote with a smile.

"What?"

"You've passed."

Chapter 17: Chapter 17 Pre-War

Mexico's rainy season began gently, like an unripe girl. The sun hid behind thin clouds, painting the sky a light golden yellow. A continuous drizzle fell in the faint sunlight, soaking the trees and grass until they dripped with verdant vitality.

The mist by the riverbanks wove a hazy veil of smoke, as several small boats sailed through the rain, creating gentle ripples on the river's surface. Seeing this scene, Xiulote couldn't help but reminisce and miss the distant water towns of Jiangnan.

It had been two weeks since the meeting with the envoy from Xilotepec City-State. Although the Chief Commander had made a harsh declaration, it would still be a year before it could be realized. The nobility of Xilotepec still had time to hesitate, argue and hope for reinforcements from their western allies, uncertain of their arrival.

At this moment, he was in the forest by the river, directing some woodworkers and laborers, struggling to chop down the tough yellow rosewood with their crude stone axes.

This species of convex-shaped yellow rosewood was an exceptionally fine redwood that could grow twenty to twenty-five meters tall, with a hard texture, beautiful grain, clear tone, and a faint fragrance.

It was generally used for making high-grade guitars and furniture, and in later times, was worth its weight in gold. Now, Xiulote planned to use it to construct catapults.

With the help of experienced woodworkers, he had completed the design of a human-powered catapult: it was a fixed trapezoidal frame, four to five meters tall, roughly the height of a wall. There was a long, lever-like catapult arm, tentatively set at eight meters in length, with a sling attached to the top and ropes for pulling at the bottom. A crossbeam was placed on the frame, and it was tied to the middle of the catapult beam and two meters from the base of the catapult arm with sisal ropes.

When the catapult operator pulled the ropes, the two-meter short arm would drive the six-meter long arm, the crossbeam would remain stable while rotating on the frame, and the rocks placed at the top would be launched in a parabolic trajectory, striking distant cities.

However, when trying to turn the design into a physical object, Xiulote faced his first problem: the crossbeam and catapult arm bore too much stress and were prone to breaking.

Not understanding the techniques for reinforcing connections in wood or the methods for hardening wood, Xiulote could only think of a simple and rough idea: to use the best wood. The woodworkers thus recommended yellow rosewood.

Chopping such a hard wood with a stone axe was like sawing a tree with a pocket knife. So an hour later, when Aweit found Xiulote, he was still sitting on a rock by the river, boredly watching the laborers work.

"Can you get me a few bronze axes?"

"For such excellent equipment, you'll have to ask the Tonsured Guard to borrow it, they're currently the only ones that have them in the camp. Of course, that's if they're willing to lend them to you."

"Then I might as well ask the King." Thinking about the stern-faced Totec with his tonsured hair and tattooed face, Xiulote felt a great pressure. "At least the King seems much easier to talk to."

Aweit chuckled without commenting. "I came to see you on important business today. Put aside your big toy for now. There's a battle coming in the next few days, and I've applied to the King to take you to observe it. We need to leave tonight."

"What battle? Wait, what toy? I'm creating a catapult, a revolutionary weapon."

"An ambush on the Otomi people. The first batch of twenty-thousand reinforcements from Otapan has been on the move for a week and will soon be within the range of the elite troops' ambush. Surpassing the era? Wait until your toy becomes a usable weapon before you say that."

"When did the legion set up the ambush?" Xiulote thought and then said, "You mean the group of warriors that disappeared a few days ago?"

"Eh, when did you see that? Seems like that army's movements aren't very discreet."

"Alright, I'll go. But why the sudden impulse to take me to see a battle? ...Aweit, it's you who wants to join the fight, right?"

Aweit laughed without answering.

"Don't stop, you all must cut down the yellow rosewood trees within these two days..."

After shedding his priestly robes, Xiulote donned green leather armor and a battle robe, his entire persona radiating vigor, with the delicate features of his face gradually revealing a resilience in its lines.

After taking some rest and making preparations at the camp, accompanied by a retinue of about a hundred escorts, the two of them bypassed the city and headed west through the forest from the north.

Marching in the mountainous rainforest during the rainy season was arduous. Xiulote struggled through the soft, humus-rich soil underfoot, with no glimpse of the sky above and tangled roots beneath his feet, soaked through by the rain.

However, such difficulties were nothing compared to those in the tropical rainforests of the northeast or southeast plains. The rainforest in the rainy season was a nightmare for

large-scale military marches, with swamps, poisonous creatures, miasmas, and water sources all representing unavoidable deaths.

After marching for two days, on the morning of the third day, they finally reached the ambush legion's camp, a small plateau behind a hill.

The camp was orderly and quiet, and Xiulote occasionally saw Jaguar Warriors wearing tiger head feathered helmets, donning yellow-patterned leather armor, and carrying shields and war clubs.

Aweit led Xiulote into the central large tent, where the Commander-in-Chief that Xiulote had seen before was present, one of the commanders draped in a Sun Stone cloak, with the image of a war club behind him.

"Casal," Aweit greeted the commander warmly, "How is the situation with the enemy?"

Casal just nodded with a faint smile, "Twenty thousand, from Otapan. Five thousand are City-State Warriors, the other fifteen thousand are conscripted Village Warriors."

"Only five thousand warriors? What good is so few men for reinforcement?"

"This reinforcement is merely a gesture. They march very slowly, only covering about a dozen miles a day, and with scouts posted far out, they spend most of their time waiting for scout reports. Their resolve for battle is very questionable. I estimate that as soon as they see that the situation is unfavorable, they will retreat."

"On their familiar terrain, fully-armed warriors certainly cannot catch these mountain folk," nodded Aweit, "So what's your plan?"

"We have eight thousand warriors. I plan to divide our forces into three groups and take the initiative to strike. Now that you're here, I'll entrust four thousand warriors to you to attract attention at the front. Once the battle begins, Balda will lead two thousand warriors in an attack from the left flank. And I will take five hundred Jaguar elites and fifteen hundred warriors to circle around and strike from the rear," Casal said, punctuating his words with a forceful punch of his fist.

A robust warrior beside them smiled at Aweit; this was Balda, identifiable by the patterns on his helmet and leather armor, presumably a hereditary noble from the Eagle Warrior Group.

Eight thousand against twenty thousand and still dividing their forces into three separate attacks at different times? Xiulote was full of questions, but seeing the confident expressions of the commanders in the tent, he temporarily put aside his doubts.

Returning to their own tents, the warriors rested early, conserving their energy for the next day's battle.

Lying on an officer's straw bed, the tips of the grass carried a natural scent, slightly prickly. This type of bed was already much more comfortable than the ground bedding of the common soldiers. Xiulote raised his concerns with Aweit.

"The fighting strength of an army isn't absolutely related to its numbers," Aweit replied with a light chuckle, "It depends on specific battle terrain and scenarios, as well as stamina consumption."

"For example, a Jaguar Warrior, before exhausting his stamina, can easily take on three regular warriors or ten Village Warriors, especially on narrow terrain. But in siege battles, he counts as no more than an ordinary Village Warrior, because a single stone thrown by a Village Warrior can kill him."

"And a Village stone-thrower, in close combat, is only worth half a Village Warrior. If given enough time to throw stones, he can be equivalent to a regular warrior. Once holding advantageous terrain, in mountain warfare or defending a city, he can inflict greater damage with his elevated position than even a Jaguar Warrior."

"The ones worth paying attention to are the five thousand City-State Warriors on the other side. On a large open battlefield, the Village Warriors are mostly there to maintain the line or to deplete the enemy's throwing spears and stones. Their crude stone and wooden spears limit the damage they can do to Armored Warriors, and their sparse shields and armor make them more vulnerable. Low morale makes them more likely to break."

"Actually, it's the warriors, only the warriors are the core of a city-state! Tomorrow's battle won't be difficult. It's a good chance for you to see the world. Xiulote, sleep at ease~~"

Chapter 18: Chapter 18: First Battle

The midday sun fell from the clear sky, sweeping over the land and the shadows of the forest, removing the dew in the woods and meadows. Today was a good day, suitable for battle and martial prowess.

Xiulote knew today was a good day too. In the Aztec calendar, today was the sixth day of the twenty days of the Sun Calendar month, symbolizing death, vitality, and vigor, represented by a skull. It was an auspicious day.

Therefore, the commanders chose to strike today.

At the auspicious moment, he stood with Aweit on top of a hill, accompanied by four thousand Samurais, quietly waiting for the enemy to appear.

Aweit occupied the highlands, the commander's battle flag planted at the highest point, surrounded by a thousand-Samurai battalion. The remaining three battalions were

arrayed in a single line in front, positioned slightly lower. The Samurais sat on the hill, their shields and war clubs placed on the ground in front of them, conserving their energy to the greatest extent.

In Xiulote's view, the enemy's flags appeared first, scattered scouts, followed by draft soldiers from the scattered villages, and then Samurais with Armor, carrying shields and war clubs, and finally groups of Militias wearing only tunics, wielding Stone Spears.

The two sides discovered each other. The enemy commander was about four to five quarters away, deploying combat formations. The Samurais took up their shields and war clubs, five Otomi Warrior battalions gathered in the middle, three Militia battalions expanding on each flank, shielding the army's wings, five Militia battalions arrayed in front, and four Militia battalions scattered at the rear.

Xiulote observed the enemy's formation changes, their battle strategy was to prioritize the protection of the Warrior battalions. They scattered the Militia battalions in four directions to withstand potential assaults and ranged attacks. The Warrior battalions were not placed on the front line to avoid being entangled by the enemy forces, making it difficult to retreat.

In other words, the enemy's core force was always ready to bolt. Xiulote was somewhat speechless.

The two sides thus confronted each other from afar. The enemy's scouts continuously spread out to investigate both flanks, while both commanders continuously assessed the strength and number of each other's forces.

Aweit's four battalions occupied the hilltops, always maintaining a defensive posture.

Xiulote could clearly sense the enemy commander's hesitation. It must have been after assessing their opponent's strength that they developed some confidence within their means.

After a while, as the scouts from both flanks returned, confirming no enemy ambush within a certain distance, the enemy commander finally began the attack.

From his high position, Xiulote watched the battlefield unobstructed below.

The Otomi recalibrated their formation. Three Militia battalions on each flank began to advance and expand, two Warrior battalions respectively supplemented behind them, pressing the formation and acting as the backbone of the flanks. The central three Warrior battalions slightly expanded, following the five Militia battalions as they advanced together, the rear Militia battalions continued in a loose formation, shielding the army's rear.

The prelude to the war was slow, perhaps building up the energy for the impending burst.

Soon, the two armies were just several hundred meters apart, confronting each other from the hills above and below. The Otomi Militias yelled loudly, intimidating their opponents, boosting their own morale, and also releasing the fear before the battle.

This meaningless intimidation, the Samurai were used to seeing, and the four thousand Mexica Samurai on the hill still maintained their defensive posture, only rising with shields and clubs in hand, waiting for the coming assault.

Two battalions of Otomi stone throwers advanced to the foot of the hill, beginning to throw stones uphill. The stones fell like raindrops, as powerless as raindrops. Stone throwing from below up couldn't inflict significant harm on the Samurai in Leather Armor and Wooden Shields.

The Mexica Samurai grew restless, facing these stone throwers who were like gifts to them, they developed a desire to charge and engage in melee. Aweit still ordered them to hold shields for defense, maintaining the formation. The defensive bugle then continued to sound atop the hill, suppressing the beasts inside the warriors.

Seeing the stone throwers couldn't disrupt the enemy's formation, the Otomi commander ordered the stone throwers to retreat.

The Otomi's advantage lay in the massive numbers of Militias. To overcome the well-trained Mexica Samurai with Militias, they had to disrupt the Samurai formation, enveloping them in constant assault, continuously wearing down the Samurai's stamina until they lost the speed and strength to wield their weapons.

Only then could the Militias, with their rudimentary Stone Spears, fight a consumptive battle acceptable against the Samurai, akin to farmers besieging unmounted Light Armored Knights.

The three battalions of Otomi Militia then charged uphill, howling as they rushed towards the Mexica Samurai's shields and war clubs, only to be struck down before the war clubs, smashed, cut, broken, turning into warm corpses. This pressure was far from the limits of the Mexica Samurai, their casualties were minimal, only depleting their stamina, gradually pulling their formation towards both flanks.

Three Militia battalions on each flank began to accelerate forward, attempting to encircle the Samurai, this encirclement serving more as harassment.

Suddenly, the real force, two battalions of Otomi Warriors, pounced from the flanks, fiercely attacking the flank of two Mexica Samurai battalions.

Only then did Aweit issue the command to attack, the drums of the offensive quickly resounding through the hills. The three thousand Mexica Samurais at the front burst out with a shout, the Samurais began to disregard their stamina, unleashing their most ferocious attacks. They no longer swung their shields but accelerated as their war clubs traced arcs, slicing through soft torsos, striking hard skulls.

Their formation quickly pressed towards the enemy in front, the combat area rapidly expanding. The Samurais plunged into intense combat, which also meant the commander had already lost the ability to command them, at least until this battle was over.

Chapter 19: Chapter 18 The First Battle_2

The real battle had barely begun when the three militia battalions of Otomi in the very front couldn't withstand the pressure of rapid casualties anymore and collapsed from the front, their organization reduced to zero. They had fulfilled their important mission as cannon fodder vanguards and were of no further use in this battle.

The two battalions of Otomi warriors from the central army quickly pushed forward, brutally dispersing the militia to both sides with their shields, and then, without giving the Mexica warriors any more chance to recover their strength, they roared and charged at the opponents in front of them.

At the same time, the militia at the rear also launched an assault and engaged in combat with the command battalion where Aweit was located, thereby restraining the last Mexica reserve force.

Watching the enemy warriors close in from all directions, faces twisted, howling, the clash of shields and weapons echoed in his ears, and every so often, the crisp snap of breaking bones. Blood splattered, staining Xiulote's feet, a sea of crimson before his eyes.

Xiulote's heart hammered violently, every second stretching out as long as a century. He couldn't help but glance at Aweit, only to see a face both unfamiliar and familiar, firm and cold, watching the battle unfold with no expression.

The entire hillside that could be used for combat was filled. In the front, there were four thousand Otomi warriors and two thousand militia, semi-encircling three Mexica warrior battalions, while at the rear, four Otomi militia battalions harassed and restrained Aweit's command battalion.

At this moment, the Otomi commander Jiowar still had one warrior battalion in reserve, two advanced cannon fodder slinger battalions, plus four ordinary cannon fodder militia battalions. He also sent additional forces to gather the recently dispersed three militia battalions.

Jiowar's eyes shone fiercely as he watched the battle ahead, looking for gaps in the formation, ready to deploy the last warrior battalion to completely tear apart the Mexica warriors' defense line. An unconscious smile of victory crept onto his face.

The smile had not yet fully formed when it suddenly froze. Two Mexica warrior battalions appeared out of nowhere on the outermost hill pack on the right flank, surging towards the center of the battlefield at high speed.

Seeing the two approaching Mexica warrior battalions from afar, Xiulote at the center of the formation finally regained his composure. In reality, discounting the intimidation, the preliminary skirmishing with slings, and the actual hand-to-hand combat between warriors on both sides, it had lasted only half an hour; a full engagement merely a quarter hour.

Now, the Otomi commander had a quarter hour to hesitate: either push the last warrior battalion, along with all the militia battalions, to meet the rapidly approaching two thousand Mexica warriors, hoping that the warriors on the hill could break through the defense line first.

Or retreat immediately, leave the militia to the Mexica, and let as many warriors escape as possible from the hill, heading into the familiar mountain forests to safety.

Jiowar made his choice swiftly. The first option was to bet all the chips for victory, the second was to accept losing at least half. Glancing at the hilltop, where a gradually emerging advantage could be seen, he hesitated for a moment, then clenched his teeth, fought to suppress the ominous premonition in his heart, and ordered the four militia battalions to attack forward, temporarily holding off the Mexica reinforcements.

Wearing the majestic eagle warrior outfit, Balda led the two Mexica warrior battalions like a hurricane, charging directly into the center of the four thousand militia, embroiling themselves in the most intense close combat.

The militia howled as they charged, thrusting their long spears, glancing off the leather armor and shields, then falling, shattered by the war club's blows, like waves scattering on the shore.

Their morale melted away like ice and snow. Yet, the high-flying commander's banner in the back and the approaching one thousand reserve warriors still maintained the baseline of their morale.

The situation was at a stalemate for the time being, but Aweit at the top of the hill revealed a genuine smile. Even as the fierce combat and bloodshed roared around him, he turned and tossed a joke Xiulote's way, "The fish has finally taken the bait."

The melee continued for another quarter hour, the Mexica warriors in the front had been pushed so hard they were squeezed together with the command battalion. The war

clubs' strikes were exhausting too much strength, and the warriors on the hill started to use their shields more defensively.

The stamina of the warriors on both sides hadn't reached their limits yet, and they were far from massive casualties. Out of the eight thousand engaged warriors, at this point, only about three to four hundred on each side had lost their combat ability.

But when Casal's five hundred Jaguar warriors and one thousand five hundred warriors appeared on the left rear side of the battlefield, dark clouds obscured all the sunlight in Jiowar's heart, and the Otomi commander almost instantly lost all will to fight.

The familiar Jaguar Beast Helmet was the nightmare of all city-state warriors, a terror of the Otomi people's tales through generations. Although Jiowar didn't believe in stories, he was acutely aware of the fearsome combat ability of the Jaguar warriors on the frontline.

The urgent sound of the retreat bugle resounded across the battlefield as the semi-engaged Otomi command battalion rapidly disengaged from the fight. Jiowar issued his last pointless command, ordering the two slinger battalions to hold off the incoming Jaguar warriors.

Immediately, he abandoned the embattled militia and the still-fighting warriors and fled towards the forest to the right rear.

Casal sent a thousand Mexica warriors to chase Jiowar. Then he detached another five hundred to ambush the Otomi militia currently engaged with Balda from behind.

As for himself, he led the Jaguar warriors straight towards the biggest catch, the four thousand Otomi warriors fighting fiercely on the mountaintop.

The retreat signal reached the summit. The first to react were the four thousand Otomi militia tasked with restraining Aweit behind the hills.

Without the warriors to support them, these seemingly simple mountain folk already had a reserve of strength. Seeing the Jaguar warriors charging over from a distance, they knew things were not looking good and immediately scattered towards the distant forest.

Aweit's command camp had just been freed from the battle. He did not concern himself with the militia but immediately divided his command into two groups, engaging deeper into the Otomi warriors from both sides.

Xiulote thus settled down completely and began to carefully observe the battlefield.

It was only then that the Otomi warriors at the summit realized the situation was dire. Under the leadership of the hereditary nobility, they struggled to withdraw from the fight

while trying hard to maintain order. The warriors at the front fought even more fiercely, while those at the back began to disperse.

When swarms of Jaguar warriors charged into the rear of the Otomi battle group, like a stone thrown into a lake, they immediately pressed out an inward ripple among the crowd, and as the ripple spread, the crowd scattered like splashed water.

The remaining two thousand Otomi militia on the summit completely collapsed. Shouting in panic, they turned their backs to the enemy and fled, only to be mown down like stalks of corn.

The real casualties began.

With the Jaguar warriors' stabbing charge and the skilled whirl of the war clubs, striking like fierce storms on Otomi shields, leather armor, backs, and legs, the warriors fell prostrate to the ground.

Squeezed from both sides, the Otomi warriors lost their formation quickly, and the army's morale plummeted rapidly. The Jaguar warriors intimidated them with war cries while striking with physical force, and within a quarter of an hour, a great rout ensued.

From this moment on, every minute saw ten times as many Otomi warriors fall as before.

The Otomi warriors at the front line entered their final frenzy, then quickly exhausted their strength amidst the siege and were knocked unconscious by the wooden sides of the warriors' war clubs.

The Otomi warriors on the flanks and sides threw down their heavy obsidian clubs and scattered from the pincers towards the distant forest, struggling for their last breath of life.

Feeling the swift weakening of resistance, the Mexica warriors on the summit finally let out victorious shouts. They began to show mercy, using the blunt angles and sides of the war clubs to strike at the legs and backs of the Otomis, disabling their ability to move.

At this point, the head-on battle ended, and the Mexica began to pursue the opponent, easily capturing the enemy like catching turkeys. The great capture commenced.

Standing atop the hill, smelling the thick scent of blood that couldn't dissipate in the air, watching the Otomi's frantic fleeing, listening to the passionate cheers of the Mexica warriors, Xiulote felt a surreal sense of unreality.

A quarter of an hour before, the Otomi were struggling in their dying throes, half an hour before, he was being besieged by the enemy, an hour before, the situation was turning against them, and two hours before, the battle had just begun.

"Is this what war is?" Xiulote asked, looking at Aweit.

"This is not war," Aweit finally revealed a genuine smile, "This is only the beginning!"

Chapter 20: Chapter 19 Funeral

The setting sun faded into the West, returning to the end of the Divine Kingdom. The rosy glow of the sky also vanished, just like the dissipating breath of life.

Then darkness approached, swallowing the crimson earth, burying all cruelty, marking the end of the hunt.

Scattered bonfires ignited beneath the hills. The Samurai counted their spoils of war, while Aweit and Casal discussed the casualties from the recent battle.

The fight had taken the lives of over three hundred Mexica Samurai and injured over seven hundred. The majority of casualties occurred during the phase when they were besieged on the mountaintop, especially on the semi-encircled flank of the Samurai. Balda's assault squad suffered minimal losses, and Casal's Jaguar warriors had not lost a single life.

The more elite the unit, the more cautiously they were used, often only in decisive strikes, while avoiding protracted battle as much as possible.

The Otomi people suffered heavy losses. Prior to the great rout, roughly three to four hundred warriors were lost, and during the dispersal, troops on the mountain were annihilated in groups, resulting in fifteen to sixteen hundred dead and injured within half an hour. The subsequent hunt captured seven to eight hundred more.

Of the warriors at the mountaintop, only slightly over a thousand managed to escape, their ranks completely decimated, their formation irreparably broken. Even if those who fled were lucky enough to return to Otapan City, it would take several months of rest for them to recover any fighting capacity.

Jiowar still managed to flee, leading the very last battalion of warriors. In the forests local to the Otomi people, once they slipped away into the woods, it was like mice scurrying back into their burrows, vanishing without a trace.

The statistics on the Militia were even more roughly estimated. On the mountaintop, the Otomi Militia trapped with the Samurai bore the brunt of the carnage, nearly half of them falling. The Militia engaged by Balda also suffered significant losses. The four thousand Militia who had circled around to contain the enemy managed to escape quickly,

sustaining minimal losses. As for the last two slinger battalions, these seasoned Hunters only hastily launched two inaccurate volleys of stones before retreating into the forest ahead of the Jaguar warriors' charge.

Overall, the Militia lost just over two thousand men and saw another two thousand captured. However, it's likely that the scattered Militia simply fled directly back to their homes, no longer participating in the subsequent war.

"The weakest in combat, the Militia, always incur the smallest losses in every battle, never exceeding thirty percent. Xiulote, do you know why?" Aweit asked with twinkling eyes.

"Is it because every time, they break and flee after losing twenty percent?" Xiulote guessed with a smile.

"You're correct. But there's another reason," Avini laughed. "They carry the least gear, so no one can catch up when they run."

"Haha," Xiulote laughed. On the American Continent without Cavalry, the Militia did have this advantage, much like the Japanese foot soldiers, easy to flee.

Xiulote soon found it difficult to laugh. The bodies of over three hundred Mexica Samurai were neatly laid out in a freshly dug large pit. He looked at their frozen expressions, many of whom he had only met yesterday, today they lay companions with the yellow soil. Life was so unpredictable, stirring deep emotions within him.

The remainder of the warriors were even more moved, having spent days and nights together, now abruptly parted. Since the battle was won, a funeral was needed to console the living.

In the Theocratic Era, Priests enjoyed supreme authority but also carried the burden of being the bridge between humans and gods. It was their unavoidable duty to conduct rites for Heaven and Earth, pray for good harvests, and guide the deceased.

The Samurai looked to Xiulote expectantly, and Aweit gave him an encouraging smile with a wink. Xiulote sighed deeply.

The young man then recalled the rituals taught by his grandfather, donned a long Feather Crown, draped himself in a black Tengu Costume, raised the Divine Staff, built an altar on the hills, and then ignited a raging bonfire.

The name Xiulotel, symbolizing death and rebirth, was fittingly congruent with the current time.

The warriors positioned themselves below the altar. The mournful sound of drums began to play, paired with the yearning notes of flutes, giving rise to a nocturnal elegy.

"The earth trembled, the Mexica people began to sing." A young figure danced on the altar, his clear voice shouting, beseeching the gods for a response, guiding the souls of the departed.

Below the altar, thousands of warriors stripped off their shirts, commencing a frenzied dance, the warriors' dance. Then, the flickering bonfire shone, trembling and shaking the ground.

This was the dance.

"He made the Jaguar join him in his dance,

To witness the ebb and flow, the resting of life.

He stood atop the wings of the Divine Eagle, shouting,

Weep, Mexica people!

The battlefield is thus,

The place where we honor the gods with Holy Blood!

"

The warriors' steps grew more urgent, the sound of drums like rain, accompanied by the cries of the Jaguar and the Divine Eagle, as if they emerged from an ancient Wilderness.

In their footsteps, the Jaguar warriors quietly departed and returned with the agonized moans of many injured, a thousand captives with hindered movement, laid out around the edge of the large pit.

This was the preparation.

"The Divine Eagle stained red with blood,

The Jaguar roars in the face of death.

War Armor shattered,

Long crowns discarded.

Precious gemstones like rain fell,

Vibrant Feathers ablaze.

Samurai's bodies broken,

Lost in the blood,

Returned to the dust.

"

The warriors danced forgetfully, the earth-shaking drumbeats and footsteps masking the moans of life's departure. Warm fluids poured forth, submerging the bodies of the fallen in the pit, fulfilling the sacred words of the prayer.

This was the sacrifice.

"In the world, nothing is sacred,

like death on the battlefield,

as brilliant as the blooming of flowers!

We repay the Chief Divine who bestowed life,

with the vitality that has passed:

Huitzilopochtli,

Huitzilopochtli!

Huitzilopochtli!!!

"

The samurai halted their steps, prostrated on the warm earth, and called out the name of the Guardian God in unison. Thus, they did so thrice.

This was the calling of the gods.

"City of the Gods,

Teotihuacan,

is also the Tomb of the Gods,

a bridge that connects life and death.

My heart longs for it,

yet it is beyond my reach.

In this place the departed awaken,

in this place the departed rise,

in this place the departed live,

in this place the departed find peace.

This is the Chief Divine's promise,

and we pray for the departed.

The god has arrived!

"

The warriors beneath the divine altar suddenly burst into a clamor, praying loudly, shouting the names of the departed, speaking their last farewells, and then, suddenly, silence.

This was farewell.

"The god has arrived!

Escorting the souls of the departed,

to the red kingdom.

And then the god said:

You have awakened.

Behold the red sky,

behold the red dawn,

behold the red curassow,

behold the red swift.

The butterflies have flown.

"

Above and below the platform, there was silence. The warriors buried all traces. Only the distant sound of the drum and the blessed ocarina remained.

This was rebirth.

Xiulote extinguished the bonfire, and the sky to the East gradually revealed the first glimmers of dawn.

The warriors gazed at the distant Morning Star, which was the sustenance of their spirit. In this era, the souls of people dwelled above the Nine Heavens, below the Nine Netherworlds, and not among the living.

Subsequently, one after another, the samurai climbed the hill, cut a lock of their hair, and placed it beside Xiulote.

Xiulote looked on in surprise at these samurai. He knew that this was a high honor, signifying the samurai's allegiance and their willingness to fight for him.

The funeral was over, and dawn had arrived.