

Civilization 172

Chapter 172 Blood and Guilt by Association_3

The darkness made the youth vulnerable, and he couldn't help but feel a surge of sorrow: "To die before achieving success, forever causing heroes to weep in their garments. The ancients truly did not deceive me!" Unintentionally, he had entered the state of mind of Zhuge Liang, the military strategist.

At that time, the little green snake finally emerged leisurely from underground. It wriggled on Xiulote's clothes, removing the traces of water, then unceremoniously coiled around the youth's neck, assuming a comfortable "?" position. Xiulote inexplicably felt a lot more at peace and fell deeply asleep once again.

The night was so long and hard to bear that many could not sleep.

When the stone door opened again, Xiulote sat up alertly, with the little green snake gone once again. The light of a candle came from outside the door, illuminating the serene face of the Elder and the guard captain holding a clay pot.

The Elder did not speak. He looked at the expression of the youth, and a barely visible smile flickered across his face, never to be seen again. Then he made a gesture and turned to leave.

Xiulote followed behind with solemnity, passing through the long sloping corridor, the walkways of the deities, to once again arrive in front of the palace's window.

In the abrupt brightness, Xiulote strained to adjust his eyes, scrutinizing the scene before him. How familiar the sight was: the gathered nobility and samurai, the high priests ready to perform the sacrifice. There was a solemn silence between heaven and earth, only the celebratory singing was absent.

A handsome young man smiled foolishly, the first to climb up the towering War God Hall. The chanting of the priests rose once again.

"The sinful Prince Biril of Texcoco, off to the realm of the War God! He shall offer a divine sacrifice, to atone for his offense against the deities and the King!"

It was a very familiar voice, one he hadn't heard for a long time. Xiulote looked on in astonishment, only then noticing that the priest dressed in the garb of the Supreme Priest, holding aloft the Obsidian Dagger, was actually his own grandfather! He looked around more carefully, but could not find Quetzal's figure.

Xiulote looked at the Elder in shock, and the Elder nodded calmly.

"My child, the Texcoco Prince has poisoned Quetzal. Your grandfather is now the new Chief Priest."

In front of the War God Hall, with all eyes upon him, Biril stood atop the Great Temple, surveying the capital city at his feet. So, this was the revelation of the dream... He laughed bitterly for a moment, then the high priests laid him upon the Sacrificial Stone. His body was swiftly separated and rolled down the stone steps.

Behind Biril were all the prince's bloodlines of Texcoco, a heritage of a hundred years, totaling more than five hundred people. Following them were over four hundred sons of the Great Nobility, and

finally, several dozen heads of lesser noble families. They were drugged, limbs numb, bodies painted with the blue of sacrifice, one by one ascending the War God Hall. Their spirits returned to the Divine Kingdom, while their bodies rolled into the dust.

This time, there was no need to ask for names. For their names had long been a part of the history of the Alliance. They had once shone at the pinnacle and now wilted overnight.

There was no cheering at today's sacrifice. Below the Great Temple, the faces of the nobility were grave, their hearts trembling. This was entirely different from the feeling of sacrificing enemy nobles. The people on the stage had been celebrating and drinking with them just the day before, exalted above all others, and now they were being sent to the sacrificial altar, how could this not instill fear!

Those glorious names, even longer than the history of the Alliance, are what every Mexica noble must learn by heart, the true elite. And now, right before everyone, a prince, two honored nobles, close to ten hereditary nobles, would forever be extinct, their lineage broken, vanishing from the eyes of the deities!

This was an unprecedented large-scale purge in the history of the Alliance. Although the Prince of Texcoco in a fit of rage poisoned the Chief Priest, an unforgivable crime, there was no need to implicate so many!

If the capital had not been sealed off, and the nobles closely supervised by the Royal Warriors, it is likely that many of the nobility would have already fled back to their fiefs, mobilizing Samurai to protect themselves.

Among them, the Prince of Tlacopan was particularly nervous. He attempted to escape in disguise twice, but was intercepted by the Elder Guards. Subsequently, he heavily bribed Uguel, who then gave him advice on how to seek an audience with the Elder. Under the Elder's indifferent gaze, the Prince took

the initiative to relinquish control of the 6000 Tlacopan Warriors, as well as the Chinampas that supported a portion of them.

Only then did the Elder nod amiably, consoling with kind words. He granted the Prince the scepter symbolizing his status, the Royal Token indicating trust, and arranged a marriage with the grandniece of the Chief Priest. The Prince of Tlacopan finally felt slightly at ease.

In the depths of the hidden dungeon, dozens of Texcoco's High Priests were secretly executed. Most of them had the blood of the Prince and the Great Nobility and were holding divine power, which hindered reform. And in the largest dungeon, more than a thousand young Texcoco nobles and nobility Battle Groups were detained. These elite noble Samurai were not part of the purge, for the Elder had another use for them.

The Elder calmly looked at the Great Temple stained red. His eyes reflected the blood color, unfathomable and undisturbed. When his glance shifted ever so slightly, the nobility, both great and small, bowed their heads in solemn silence, shuddering like cicadas in cold weather. But the genuine reverence and obedience were no longer present.

The Elder sighed in his heart. These days, the Great Nobility continuously sought audiences, requesting the Elder to pardon the Prince of Texcoco and not to involve too many. Though under the Elder's authority, the nobility bowed down once more, the hearts of the people were already excessively drained.

In the entire Texcoco Lake District, there were only two Princes, twenty honored nobility families, and a little over a hundred hereditary nobles. This purge completely eradicated the Texcoco line, exterminated the most conservative religious nobles and Priests, and reclaimed a large amount of land and wealth. At the same time, it deterred the Great Nobility and cleared obstacles for the religious reformation.

But his prestige had been exhausted. The nobility were suppressed to the brink of rebellion, and for at least several years, their interests could no longer be stripped away. Indeed, the Alliance needed to quickly prepare for the next war, using the victory of war to enhance the core authority and to feed the loyalty of the nobility with the flesh and blood of enemies.

At this time, Xiulote finally calmed down. He looked seriously at the Elder, not knowing how to begin.

The Elder's face remained impassive. He spoke slowly.

"My child, the first nest of rats has been removed. You must help Xutel compile the religious scriptures, clarify the Code of Law. You must organize texts and teach Priest apprentices. You must also prepare, make more Longbows. After next year's autumn harvest, the Alliance will send out troops again."

Xiulote bowed his head. The autumn wind blew through his long hair, bringing with it a faint stench of blood.

By sacrificing the bloodline of the Texcoco Prince and taking back the military authority of Tlacopan, the capital's fifty thousand Warriors now had only one allegiance. There would be no repeat of history, when the Spaniards arrived, the Prince rebelled, and the Alliance erupted into civil war. This sacrifice of a thousand Great Nobles was the blood-paved step towards the next level of advancement.

The progress of an era needed the fuel of life and a helmsman to steer its direction, driving towards a more powerful future. This purge was about stripping the ruling class of their interests, removing latent threats, centralizing power and land in preparation for the religious reformation. Without absolute authority, it could never be accomplished. By making such a choice, the Elder had renounced his own legacy.

Realizing this, Xiulote sincerely bowed to the Elder and accepted the command with deep reverence!