

## Civilization 187

### Chapter 187: The Merchant and the Feathers

The chilly wind blew, causing the flowers and plants in the courtyard to tremble in the cold. The warrior's hanging feathers swayed silently, rendering the scene solemnly lethal.

Tikalo looked up at Xiulote's suddenly imposing back, feeling fear in his heart for the first time. He struggled in vain in the hands of the samurais, desperately shouting aloud.

"Your Highness! Your Highness! Spare me! I am the close friend of the Head Warrior Olosh, and have been sincere to you since we first met two years ago! The War God is my witness!"

Listening to the Mayan merchant's pleas for mercy and the oaths to the War God, Xiulote slightly frowned. The other party was spouting nonsense, yet his psychological defenses remained solid.

He put away his smile and turned around expressionlessly, watching the merchant coldly.

"Oh? You are a close friend of Master Olosh? But he told me that you are an utterly deceptive merchant. Since he was young and took a bag of your cigarettes, he has never been able to settle the debt. Today, I will take your life here, and cancel the teacher's debts in one stroke!"

Tikalo's face froze, and a chill rose up. He vigorously swung his lengthy head, loudly defending himself.

"Wise Your Highness! Lending things out always accrues interest, doesn't it? Moreover, I have never asked Olosh for the principal and interest over these years. I swear by the Feathered Serpent Divine, Kukulkan, I have always treated him well!"

Tikalo earnestly swore by the great Feathered Serpent Divine, Kukulkan, which was the most sacred belief of the Maya people, seldom broken because, in fact, it was true. Although the big merchants loved charging high interest, they only did so selectively.

Since Olosh became the Head Warrior of the Holy City, he never mentioned the debt, and every time they met, Tikalo even lent some tobacco to Olosh, trying to keep in touch. Of course, he kept the account books meticulous, not missing a single cent of monthly interest. If anything happened to the Head Warrior later, his status endangered, the notebooks would still have to be presented.

Xiulote shook his head calmly. He did not speak, only watched as Tikalo was dragged onto the tall sacrificial altar.

"Your Highness! Your Highness! Spare my life! This, I, Olosh's account, cancel it out!"

Standing on the altar of sacrifice, looking at the once blood-stained marks, Tikalo was like duckweed in the wind, his legs trembling. He hesitated for a moment, then clenched his teeth and cried out in pain.

Xiulote examined Tikalo's expression carefully, the other's demeanor only slightly panicked. He shook his head again and slowly began to speak.

"Yes, the account is canceled. But the Chief Divine loves exotic fruits, and the person who harvested it must be sacrificed—serving in the Divine Kingdom. Did you say it was you who picked them?"

Tikalo's wise head quickly processed the information. Hearing the youth's relaxed tone, he quickly shouted.

"No, it was the old servant I ordered to pick it. The one by the door! He will replace me, sacrificing himself for the divine!"

Hearing this, the old servant at the door trembled but did not speak, only silently nodding. The big merchant, rich as a nation, always kept retainers willing to die for him. Feed soldiers for a thousand days, use them at the crucial time.

But Xiulote did not pay any attention. He just sternly reprimanded.

"Tikalo, wasn't it the exotic fruit you personally harvested? You dare to deceive me!"

"Yes, ah! Not... Although it was not me personally, but my admiration for you remains unchanged!"

Tikalo was firmly held down by his limbs, lying flat on the sacrificial altar. His body trembled non-stop, stubbornly nodding his divine head, still speaking clearly.

Xiulote pondered for a moment, slightly thoughtful.

"In that case, only the exotic fruit shall be offered to the divine."

The samurais released their hold, and the Mayan merchant immediately heaved a sigh of relief. He got up from the ground, grinning broadly.

"Your Highness, you truly are majestic and humorous! That joke just now nearly scared me to death."

Hearing the merchant's words, Xiulote's brow slightly furrowed, his gaze turning cold.

He again became stern, took the longbow from the retainer's hands, fitted it with an Obsidian Arrow, and aimed at Tikalo's chest. The samurais also raised their sharp War Clubs, pointing them at the merchant's vitals. The Mayan merchant was like a frog targeted by a snake, instantly stiff, not daring to move. The boundary of life and death suddenly blurred, sweat pouring down his back.

"Offer the exotic fruit. Let the Chief Divine decide your fate!"

Xiulote aimed for a moment, then lowered the bow. He picked a fist-sized cactus fruit from the merchant's gifts, thought about his archery skills, then switched to an even larger pineapple. He then signaled the guard to place the pineapple on top of the merchant's head.

The Mayan merchant's head was slender, with a smooth sloping curve, and the pineapple simply wouldn't stay put.

A moment's hesitation crossed the youth's mind, then he sternly commanded.

"Support it with your hands! Hold it steady! If it falls, it disturbs the sacrificial ritual, and that's a capital offense!"

Tikalo then used both hands to support the pineapple, and further steadied it with his head. A triangular formation encompassing his fate. Beneath, he trembled uncontrollably, nearly in tears.

Xiulote appeared extremely imposing. He once again raised the bow, aiming carefully for a while. He checked the size of the target, then stepped forward a few steps, aimed again for a while. The merchant's sweat had soaked through his clothes, dripping drop by drop onto the sacrificial altar, moistening the sacrificial blood.

Xiulote looked again at the normal distribution target not far away. The Mayan merchant had been watching the youth all this while and now shifted his gaze to the human-shaped target beside him. Then, his legs started to shake violently, and he madly prayed to the Feathered Serpent Divine in his heart.

Xiulote felt for the handgrip for a while and finally, he just gave a soft cough.

"Cough, Bertade. I need to communicate with the divine, seek their attention, the sacrificial ritual is in your hands. Let us see the choice of destiny! Aim well."