

Civilization 219

Chapter 219 Accidental Encounter_3

Ocatel shuddered, knowing that it was a critical moment that would decide life or death. The Mexica society had always been harsh, and the priests had just promulgated commercial laws. If captured by the High Priest and taken back to the Capital City at this time, he would inevitably be used as an example and offered on the sacrifice altar to deter the public.

The businessman struggled frantically, disregarding the sharp war club, and abruptly threw himself at the feet of the young priest. He clutched the priest's robe forcefully, cursing and swearing.

"Priest, spare my life please! In the name of the Guardian God, I am willing to offer all my possessions, I am willing to swear to serve you to the death!"

Xiulote had already made up his mind. He shook his head slightly and looked towards the middle-aged samurai.

The middle-aged samurai nodded understandably. He bent down, grabbed Ocatel's shoulder with one hand. Then, he reached out his other hand and pinched forcefully behind the opponent's elbow. The businessman immediately felt pain and numbness in his arm, his fingers uncontrollably loosened. The middle-aged samurai then exerted a little force, directly dragging the businessman off the ground for about forty or fifty meters. Two more samurai came forward, and Ocatel was completely subdued.

Xiulote observed the middle-aged samurai with interest. He was in his thirties, with an ordinary appearance, a weathered face, a calm yet sharp gaze. During the earlier interrogation, he had skillfully observed and applied pressure just right. The youth couldn't help but feel a sense of appreciation for talent.

"What is your name? When did you join the escort?" Xiulote gestured for the middle-aged samurai to come closer.

The middle-aged samurai's expression remained unchanged. He walked over quickly and respectfully knelt down to salute.

"Respected Your Highness, I am Esko, a samurai from the Holy City of Teotihuacan. I once followed Head Warrior Xiuxoke and fought alongside you against the Otomi. When the High Priest came to the Lake Capital City, a group of the Holy City's samurai were selected, and I then followed the High Priest, guarding by his side. I was later assigned to join your escort."

Xiulote nodded slightly, an ordinary background from the Holy City; Esko had been chosen by his grandfather and sent to join his own escort, surely he could be trusted for his loyalty.

Since coming to the Capital City, various affairs had unfolded continuously, and the young man increasingly felt a scarcity of talent, especially lacking those who could lead independently. For him now, ensuring loyalty was paramount when employing people for important tasks, with capability a secondary consideration, and origins mattered even less.

Xiulote pondered for a moment, then sharply looked at the middle-aged samurai, examining him as he asked.

"Esko, what do you think should be done with this businessman?"

Esko thought briefly, a glint in his eyes, then respectfully responded.

"Your Highness, Noble Law is about to be promulgated, and the situation in the Capital City is tense. Now is not the time to continue stimulating the nobles with luxury goods. As for this businessman, he can be dealt with right here."

Xiulote first nodded in satisfaction, then slightly shook his head.

Not long ago, his grandfather and he had talked through the night, planning much for the future. If the businessman were taken back to the Capital City, the Priesthood might trace back to a large group of nobles who violated commercial law, and he would once again become the center of the Capital City's intrigues.

It was now time to keep a low profile, not a moment for outright opposition between the priests and nobles. As for the businessman, executing him wouldn't solve any issues.

After pondering for a moment, Xiulote instructed Esko.

"Esko, I'll give you a few warriors, and leave the rest to you. Confiscate everything from the small boat, hand out a moderate punishment. Then reassure the nobles' servants, and let them go after we are gone. As for that Ocatel, have him hand over the list of trading nobles, and let him go too. He should regularly provide us with information. Yes, you handle that."

Upon hearing this, Esko bowed his head deeply. Suppressing the joy on his face, he respectfully prostrated. Then, with a strange smile, he walked towards a not-too-distant Ocatel.

After handling all this, Xiulote looked at the Head Warrior, giving a slight smile.

"Bertade, it was just a false alarm. We are at the foothills of the Capital City, and today's route was decided on the spur of the moment; there couldn't be so much danger here!"

Bertade remained silent. He had been quietly observing everything, with most of his attention on the surrounding environment. He looked around at the dense reed beds, the deserted lake bay, and the secluded islands. After a while, the loyal Head Warrior finally spoke softly.

"Your Highness, if anyone were to take action, this would be the best place."

Xiulote was momentarily startled. He carefully considered the Head Warrior's words. Someone? Who would know about this place. Take action? What sort of action. The youth suddenly fell silent. After a long pause, he solemnly shook his head.

"I trust him. You're thinking too much, why take it so far?"

Bertade's expression remained stern. He bowed his head, bending forward in respect.

"Your Highness, I don't trust. The High Priest doesn't trust either. Even if he is trustworthy, his entourage is not. Your safety cannot rely on trust alone."

Hearing the Head Warrior's words, Xiulote slowly closed his eyes, feeling the tremors and changes within his heart. After a long while, he sighed deeply.

"The most difficult thing in this world is mutual trust, the higher the colder. When many speak ill, it erodes like acid; how can it last? It's truly fearsome, truly dreadful!"

The young man shook his head. He strode forward, looking towards the distant Capital City, his heart still firm and filled with light.