

Civilization 242

Chapter 242: The Fall of the City and Conversion of Faith

By the lakeside of Texcoco, under the burning sunset, Xiulote gazed calmly ahead. Behind him followed dozens of elite Samurai, and hundreds of bustling craftsmen and laborers.

The Head Warrior stood still, guarding silently. However, the old warrior Etalik looked at the young man, silently advancing a few steps, smiled, and bowed his head in greeting.

"Your Highness, do you have any further instructions regarding the charcoal burning, brick firing, and gemstone firing here? I will follow your heart's desire! I am willing to spur the craftsmen and guard the rebirth of the Sun, until dawn envelops the earth!"

Surprised by the old warrior's candid sentiments, Xiulote looked closely at Etalik, observing the same flame in his eyes, and after a few seconds of silence, he spoke.

"Etalik, how do you perceive this place?"

The old warrior's smile faded, and he responded solemnly and decisively.

"Your Highness, the laborers are merely the burning charcoal, sustaining the operation of the Alliance. The Samurai are the hard ceramic bricks, defending the Alliance's greatness. And only you, are the crystal-clear gemstone, bearing the Chief Divine's will, guiding the Alliance forward!"

Faced with such an answer, Xiulote was astonished. He stared into the old warrior's eyes and after a long moment, he slowly nodded.

"Well done! Etalik, you will indeed be of great use!"

Upon hearing this, the old warrior bowed once more, his smile flashing across his face and then disappearing.

The lake water quietly flowed by, and several days passed in a blink. One morning, facing the first rays of the February sun, Xiulote dressed splendidly and set out again for Montezuma's palace. Soon after, he received an unexpected yet prepared message from the north.

"What? The elders have delayed the New Year's sacrificial rites by two weeks? Xilotepec has finally been conquered?!" The young man's eyes widened, his tone rising.

Aweit nodded. He stroked the soft feathers of the little golden eagle, habitually flicking its tiny head. Then, he smiled and handed the trembling cute eagle to his daughter, who looked expectant.

Alisa joyfully hugged the little Aviloztli close to her chest, bursting into an innocent smile. Then, the young girl gently stroked the neck of the little golden eagle, and it comfortably poked its head out, proudly chirping "yo yo" at Aweit.

"This news came through the night. Brought by the swiftest warriors rowing day and night: Seven days ago, there was famine and chaos within Xilotepec. Hundreds of Otomi Warriors opened the city gates at night, leading the Alliance's grand army inside, and soon the northern stronghold fell. When the

Messenger set out, only the central Temple Pyramid was still resisting, which must have been subdued by now!"

Gillim reported solemnly, standing tall. Xiulote glanced at the scarred wounds on his ears, then at the trembling shoulders of the Intelligence Officer, slightly puzzled.

"Your Highness, you have accomplished a great feat!" The Intelligence Officer smiled faintly, then looked at the young man.

"It was Commander Osellor who dispatched the Otomi Warriors you had persuaded, upon the suggestion of the encampment officer Balamo. They secretly infiltrated the city, convinced the stationed militia to revolt and surrender!"

Listening to the Intelligence Officer's praise, Xiulote calmly shook his head.

"After four months of the second siege, Xilotepec's supplies were exhausted. Even without internal support, it would have only last another month... How will the Alliance handle the aftermath?"

Aweit pondered for a moment. Reminded of the past, he reached out, affectionately ruffling the young man's hair.

"Xiulote, do not be soft-hearted! The elders have been waiting for the New Year's sacrificial rites for a long time. The Alliance needs a grand ceremony to appease the unsettled Nobility and to intimidate the vassals needing to pay tribute..."

Shortly after, Xiulote's expression was calm, and he slowly nodded. Time relentlessly forged him, ultimately hard as steel, with softness buried deep.

Meanwhile, in the distant northern stronghold, the sun rose once again. The brilliant golden glow shined on the burning Temple, turning past sacredness and faith into scorched earth, also illuminating the dim central square.

Over twenty thousand civilians were herded to the left side of the square, many of them robust Militia. They were emaciated, marked by hunger, weakly kneeling and crawling, even lacking the strength to cry. On the right side of the square were over four thousand Otomi Warriors who had just surrendered. They were unarmed, lean yet still healthy-looking, only their faces ashen, devoid of the will and courage to fight.

In the center of the square were two to three hundred Otomi Priests of various ranks. Dressed in black and white priestly garments, their hands bound with hemp rope, they knelt toward the burning Temple, weeping their last cries.

On the square, tens of thousands of Otomi people were either blankly silent or weeping in despair, anxious about their forthcoming fate. On the outside, tens of thousands of Mexican Royal Warriors surrounded the square, full-armed. Their faces fierce, holding blood-dripping War Clubs and shields, they awaited the Otomi people's next move.

In other areas of the city, teams of Mexican Samurai were dispersed, capturing thousands of elegantly dressed Noblemen and women. From all directions, they gradually converged on the main central path, ushering the softly weeping captives to the city outskirts for congregation. These people no longer had a choice.

Against the stream of captives, the Poet Warrior Balamo, pulling a downcast young Otomi Warrior, whispered affectionately,

"Natali, my good friend, do not hesitate later! Once you obey the order to kill the Otomi Priests, kneel to the Mexican Priests, and loudly praise the name of the Sun God! After all, the Sun God is also your War God, who you also need to praise on ordinary days."