

## Civilization 331

### Chapter 331 - Alliance Under the City\_2

Olte slightly bowed his head, suppressing his powerless anger. He closed his eyes and then reopened them, speaking calmly and with deep resonance.

"Mexico people, we have harassed the southern coast, and the samurai have shed blood. As you can see, the south is heavily guarded, replete with stone forts and wooden fortresses, and the samurai's blood should not flow there in vain... We are willing to hand over a large amount of gold, silver, and gemstones as a gesture of our commitment to peace!"

Xiulote observed for a moment, the old priest was composed, while Jiowar showed a look of anger. Then, he shook his head calmly and got straight to the point.

"The gaze of the Chief Divine sees all, and nothing can hide from it. Wise Priest Olte, you should understand this. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Route Army, I cannot tolerate any potential tacit understanding between you and the Tarasco people!"

Upon hearing this, the old priest became stern, looking at the young commander with an imposing demeanor, and he sighed inwardly.

"The desire of the Otomi people has never been concealed, it is only for peace and cultivation. Kind His Highness Xiulote, we do not wish to partake in the conflict between the Mexico Alliance and the Tarasco Kingdom. As witnessed by the Primordial God, we will not favor any side!"

Xiulote looked into Olte's eyes, smiled faintly, and continued to shake his head ruthlessly.

"Priest Olte, I may believe in your sincerity, but I cannot trust the Otomi people. The Northern Route Army cannot possibly march south and leave you behind us, taking on an immense and uncertain risk. You must make your position clear, in the war that will determine the fate of the world, are you Allies of the Mexica, or their enemies? Choose, Otomi people, survival or destruction!"

Hearing the unmistakable threat, General Jiowar couldn't hold back any longer, and he roared with anger.

"Warlike Mexica people, the Otomi also do not fear war! The mountain city Otapan City is as unshakeable as a meteorite from heaven, and even in an entire Era, you could not breach it! If you insist on war, it will be your own destruction!"

The old priest did not stop him. He let General Jiowar speak out, only staring intently at Xiulote's expression.

Xiulote's eyes slightly lowered. He paused for a moment, then announced calmly.

"If you are unwilling to join the Alliance in battle, the Northern Route Army will stop its southern advance and instead turn north. Starting from the end of the month, we will destroy your autumn harvest! Within a month, all your toil will be reduced to ashes, a Quarter's hard work will be wasted, not even the seeds will be salvaged. Another year without a harvest, by this time next year, you will suffer the famine of a destroyed homeland!"

Hearing such a cruel declaration, Jiowar erupted like a volcano, roaring fiercely.

"First you want to destroy the spring plowing, and now the autumn harvest. Destroying the harvest, wicked Mexica people! There are just over ten thousand of you here. If we agree to the Tarasco envoy, we could join forces to expel you, pushing you into the turbulent Lerma River!"

Hearing mention of Tarasco's envoy, Xiulote's gaze sharpened. Then, with a solemn and indifferent response, he said.

"Face reality, Otomi people! Two Mexica armies are bearing down on you, and the southern front is the main offensive force. A hundred thousand Mexica samurai attacking day and night, the state of Xitqualo is on the brink, the Tarasco people can hardly protect themselves! They will not risk marching north to siege a sturdy Wooden Fort. Without their Naval Forces' main force, they can't even cross the river!"

Then, Xiulote confidently smiled.

"A fresh batch of reinforcements has already arrived, the Northern Route Army now has twenty thousand samurai, with more successive forces continuing to pour in. This is a force you cannot resist! Besides, the era is changing, new types of weapons have emerged, and Ototpan Mountain City will no longer be able to shelter you!"

Hearing the mention of new weapons, the old priest Olte's demeanor shifted. He pondered for a moment and then raised his hand, halting Jiowar's roaring.

"Respected His Highness Xiulote, I have heard from the scouts that during your attack on the wooden fortresses along the north coast of the Lerma River, you used a kind of powerful longbow. Could we possibly see it for ourselves?"

Hearing the old priest's abrupt request, Xiulote was slightly taken aback. He thought it over in his heart, considering the capture from the Tarasco people, and eventually nodded.

"Ters, shoot an arrow outside the tent, then show them the real thing," he said.

As the guards opened the tent's door, the fresh breeze brushed against their faces, bringing with it a moistness from the water, revitalizing everyone.

Then, Ters, the trusted aide, smiled plainly. He turned around on the spot, holding the longbow, took out a copper arrow, and readied it. The plain samurai's gaze shifted slightly and settled on a wooden box fifty meters away, where the Otomi were delivering gifts. He took aim, the longbow twanged resonantly, and with the release of an arrow, the copper arrow streaked like lightning through the open tent door, and thunked into the wooden box, with the tail of the arrow quivering continuously.

Jiowar's countenance turned serious. He strode forward and forcefully pulled the copper arrow from the box, standing dumbstruck for a moment. Then, he silently returned to the priest's side, whispering two sentences in the latter's ear, the old priest's expression turning solemn.

Ters, holding the Greatbow, also approached the old priest's side.

The old priest Olte took a step closer, bending down. He opened his aged eyes, gaze burning like torches, scrutinizing each detail meticulously.

He examined the sturdy longbow, approximated the length of its body with his hands, then tested the hardness of the wood with his nail, frowning slightly. This type of hard wood was extremely difficult to work with, requiring scarce copper tools, and a long time to craft. Then, he felt the wrapped silk strings of the bowstring, observed the joint between the bow body and the string, and analyzed the specific technical details.

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Then, he took the Copper Feathered Arrows offered by Jiowar and leaned in to examine the cylindrical wooden shaft. He tested the hardness of the shaft with his fingernail once more, furrowing his brows deeply, noting that making such shafts required more labor. The copper heads, sturdy shafts, and costly feathers were costs the Otomi could not afford.

Finally, he looked at the slope-shaped bone ring on Ters's hand and let out a long sigh.

"Mexica people, you are indeed mighty and the wealthiest. Being able to equip such sturdy longbows and expend such costly feathered arrows in large quantities, your craftsmen must indeed number in the thousands!"

After a moment of contemplation, Olte's tone shifted as he stared intently at Xiulote's face.

"However, Your Highness Xiulote, even with these weapons, the idea of threatening Ototpan Mountain City remains but a fantasy! You cannot afford the loss of samurai in a siege. Unless you have other preparations?..."

Xiulote responded with a confident, calm smile. He remained serene, not answering directly, but instead spoke.

"Priest Olte, the Alliance only needs you to march southward, to plunder the lands of the Tarasco! We will aid your river crossing and cover your retreat. We need not the spoils of plunder, all the wealth will belong to you. Similarly, this time, you need not attack the fortress-dense Akanbaro State. Otomi Warriors may freely choose to head westwards, plundering across from Guamare State to Saka State, or even the affluent Chapala Lake Region!"

At this, Xiulote paused slightly. He looked solemnly at the old priest.

"Priest Olte, you were born in Guamare State, you know the surroundings far better than I. There are familiar Otomi Tribes there; I believe you can find suitable targets!"

Olte pondered for a moment, then inquired about the most crucial point.

"Your Highness Xiulote, you ask us to join the war against the Tarasco, but allow us to operate independently and choose our own targets?"

Xiulote nodded and frankly replied.

"Exactly so. Priest Olte, we need more deeds to establish mutual trust, and it is not suitable to form Allied Forces directly. However, I will dispatch small squads of samurai to follow your troops and provide regular updates. You must truly engage Tarasco in combat, otherwise... the Alliance will not tolerate another breach of contract!"

Listening to these words, the old priest Olte fell into a deep silence. Jiowar first glared menacingly at the Mexica people. Then, anxiously ruffling his hair, he awaited the old priest's wise final decision.

The fire in the large tent crackled, the wind outside the tent howled mournfully, the silent tent was filled with struggling hearts. After a long while, Olte struggled to turn his gaze to the Mexica's Commander-in-Chief, the familiar young His Highness.

"Your Highness Xiulote, we signed the last pact. You provided Ototpan City with food for five months as promised, helping us through the toughest times. I do not believe in the Mexica Alliance, but I believe in you, and I am willing to make an oath only with you!"

The old priest's eyes flashed with an unusual brilliance. Staring at the throne, he finally roared loudly, profoundly moving the gathering.

"The divine pact has ended! To make us join the war against the Tarasco, you must invoke the name of our revered ancestors! Cut your hair, slice your palm, and in the presence of all commanders, sign a lifetime Blood Oath with the Otomi, engraving all promises on indestructible stone tablets!"

Xiulote remained silent for a long while, finally nodding slowly with a complex expression.

"Priest Olte, thank you for your trust. Who will make this oath with me, is it you?"

The old priest Olte shook his head firmly. He turned and pointed his finger at the shocked and pale Jiowar.

"No! My life is nearing its end. The one who will make the lifetime Blood Oath with you will be him!"

## Chapter 333 - Oath of Alliance

The wind howled, and dark clouds hung low, casting a hush over the large tent. This was the moment that would determine the fate of the north, as the flickering campfire illuminated each solemn face.

Xiulote scrutinized General Jiowar for a while. Then, he pondered for a moment before looking towards the elder Priest.

"Priest Olte, what kind of alliance do you wish to forge? Alliance, city-state, or personal?"

Priest Olte was well-prepared. He spoke loudly,

"All three, a brotherhood pact if you will. The Mexica Alliance as the elder brother, the Otomi Alliance as the younger, the Holy City as the elder, Otapan City as the younger, you as the elder, and Jiowar as the younger brother. Both sides will establish a pact, maintaining harmony with one another. When one is under attack, the other must send troops to assist; when one goes on the offensive, the other has the duty to support!"

Hearing this, Bertade's complexion changed dramatically. He stepped forward and rebuked loudly,

"Your Highness, as the nascent sun of the Mexica, and the future master of all under heaven, how can you be sworn brothers with a general from the Otomi?"

Xiulote pondered for a brief moment, nodded slightly to the Head Warrior, and then spoke,



"Priest Olte, I am not yet in the position to fully represent the Alliance. The Alliance will never agree to a brotherhood pact, as the Mexica only accept subordinates! Besides, can you represent the nobility of the various states within the Otomi Alliance?"

Priest Olte bowed his head slightly, revealing his full head of white hair. Since the last treaty, when he had to forfeit Xilotepec City, his prestige had greatly diminished. It was quite sometime later that the elder Priest spoke in a deep voice,

"Indeed, I cannot represent the nobility of the various states. I am a religious leader, only representing the ancestral state of Otapan, and to the best of my ability to constrain the states of Guamare and Pamus. The negotiations this time will be in the form of a treaty between the Mexica Alliance and the Otomi Alliance. The Otomi will send a full legion to respond to war in exchange for food support from the Mexica people."

Then, Priest Olte calmly said,

"As long as I live, the treaty between the two alliances will be secured. If I die, Jiowar will still need your support to control Otapan City."

Xiulote watched for a while and nodded,

"I agree, you will send troops to war in exchange for a new batch of food. Similarly, I can support Jiowar, but it cannot be a brotherly relationship—the line of the Holy City cannot accept this condition!"

Priest Olte closed his eyes, his aged face quivering. After a long while, he suddenly opened his eyes and roared in a low voice,

"Then let the two city-states be sworn as brothers, with you two nominally brothers but actually subordinates! Jiowar needs enough prestige to take control of Otapan City. Henceforth, the two states will be closely related politically and united in secret. The military will respond in war, allowing each other's armies to pass, and we will present hostages in exchange for your protection within the Alliance!"

Hearing this, Jiowar's expression changed dramatically, and he clenched his hands tightly. He looked at the Young Commander, who was only the age of his own son. Then he turned to look at Priest Olte, an elderly man whose face was withered and energy nearly exhausted. After a long moment, he bowed his head deeply, saying nothing.

Xiulote's expression was serious, and he fell into deep thought. With the talk having reached this point, the Priest's intention was very direct. Jiowar represented Otapan City, pledging allegiance to him alone. The Otapan line would secure protection from the Holy City line by means of an unequal treaty, henceforth binding them together. This was a path he had never anticipated.

After a while, Xiulote laughed aloud. His eyes sparkled, no longer concealing the heroic aspirations in his heart.

"Olte, you've managed to achieve this! You've seized the most ingenious opportunity to find the most suitable chances for the Otomi people. I truly admire you for that! At this time, I cannot refuse your proposition. Come then, let us make an unbreakable blood oath under the most sacred of ceremonies, witnessed by the gods and ancestors alike!"

Upon hearing this, the elder Priest nodded calmly. No trace of joy appeared on his face. He simply performed a respectful ritual, honoring the path he had found.

Soon, the Priests accompanying the army became busy. Fragrant holy smoke rose within the large tent, and the roaring Sacred Fire was lit at the center. Priests played the distant sound of bamboo flutes. The commanders beat the deep tones of wooden drums, and the remaining Samurai began the War Dance around the center of the ceremony.

In the center of the large tent, a young Priest was the first to dance. He took up the long-unused Divine Staff and danced the Priest's dance of the Holy City, chanting clear and melodious prayers. His movements were slow and dignified, like a stalking Jaguar; his singing was high-pitched and sharp, like the cry of a soaring eagle.

The elder Priest took out an ancient ceramic mask. Half of the mask was black, and the other half was white. It was a treasured item inherited by the Otomi people for a thousand years, from the distant Olmec Era. He covered his cheeks with the mask and began an ancient dance, then rapidly swayed and shook like the Feathered Serpent of myth. Throughout the ancient ritual dance, he intermittently made low hissing sounds, the frequency of the serpent's voice was spine-chilling, making one's hair stand on end. Sometimes, he would also emit a low chant, speaking of age-old legends in an incomprehensible cadence.

A mysterious atmosphere permeated the large tent; everyone wore a stern and focused expression. In their hearts, such a sacred ceremony was real and imbued with Divine Power. To violate such a high-oath would be to suffer a devastating blow to one's reputation.

The sacred Priestly dance lasted for a full half hour, and then, both old and young Priests stopped. Xiulote was covered in sweat, while Olte swayed on the brink of collapse. Both men approached the center where the Sacred Fire burned, each calling upon different deities to descend. As the names of the gods were invoked, the commanders and the Samurai also halted their actions, kneeling on one knee and praying towards the center.

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Next, Olte beckoned, and Jiowar approached solemnly. Bertade also moved to the center, closely guarding His Highness. The priests accompanying the army mixed a large cup of ice-cold cocoa and presented it before the Sacred Fire.

Xiulote looked across at Jiowar and nodded to his old friend. Then, he pulled out the Obsidian Dagger, cut off a lock of his hair, and cast it into the Sacred Fire. Jiowar did the same, and a faint burnt smell instantly dispersed.

Then, the Young Commander unfurled his left hand. Without hesitation, he sliced the palm with the sharp Dagger. The sting came instantly, and blood dripped down, staining the cocoa below red. He then handed the sacrificial Dagger to Jiowar, while the Head Warrior at his side remained on alert.

Jiowar took the Dagger and cut deeply into the side of his palm. More blood flowed, falling continuously into the cocoa. The sacred cocoa turned a vivid red as both their bloods mingled together.

Afterward, Xiulote picked up the clay cup from the ground and drank deeply from half of the blood-red beverage. A metallic taste similar to mushrooms lingered in his mouth, accompanied by the inherent bitterness of cocoa.

"Under the watch of the Chief Divine! I, Xiulote of Teotihuacan, descendant of my predecessor monarch Acamapichtli, do swear by the spirit of my ancestors, to establish a blood oath alliance with Jiowar of Otapan!

I will regard Jiowar as a younger brother, a loyal vassal to me. For the entirety of my life, I will grant him protection. Protect his life, protect the city-state of Otapan, protect the citizens of the Otomi! The oath stands as it is made. Should I break this vow, may humans and gods alike forsake me!"

Xiulote recited loudly, the solemn ceremony evoking a special sentiment. In the distant divine smoke, he felt somewhat transfixed, as if he really could sense the touch of his ancestors and the gaze of the gods.

Jiowar was extraordinarily solemn. He took the clay cup, drained the other half of the blood-red liquid in one gulp. Then, he pressed his bleeding palm to his chest, staring at the Sacred Fire with his narrow eyes, and shouted loudly.

"Under the watch of the Primordial God! I, Jiowar of Otapan City, descendant of my predecessor monarch Otapan, do swear by the spirit of my ancestors, to establish a blood oath alliance with Xiulote of Teotihuacan!

I will regard Xiulote as an elder brother, a noble liege to me. For all my life, I will pledge my loyalty. Guard his life, provide the armies and tribute of Otapan, ensure that the people of the Otomi become his obedient citizens! The oath stands as it is made. If I violate this oath, may I suffer Divine Punishment, my blood be drained, my limbs be severed! May my ancestors witness my oath, I engrave the covenant on my face!"

As he said this, Jiowar's gaze was sharp, watching the scars on Bertade's cheeks. He lifted the blade, pressed it to his own face, and, unfazed, cut similar marks. Then, he stood there calmly, with a hint of defiance, looking at the young liege before him.

Xiulote nodded calmly. He removed the Sun Amulet from around his neck and pointed his bloodied finger toward the ground. Blood fell, dust rose, and a red stain spread across the earth.

Jiowar paused for a moment. He understood the significance and immediately hesitated, turning to look at the old Priest Olte.

The old priest's pupils shrank as he spoke softly.

"Your Highness, for thousands of years, the Primordial God has blessed the Otomi people. It is our heartfelt belief."

Xiulote shook his head solemnly and declared resolutely.

"Olte, the Chief Divine is supreme above all! The Primordial God can step down to be a Saint. If the Otomi people are to truly integrate into the Alliance, they must ultimately reverence the War God as the highest. Of course, this is not urgent, and Jiowar need not convert publicly. But at this moment, he must accept the amulet of the Chief Divine, and secretly convert here!"

Olte looked at His Highness, feeling the adamant determination. After a long silence, he nodded solemnly.

Jiowar was stunned for a long while, feeling as if weighed down by a great burden on his knees. Xiulote did not hasten him but waited calmly. The face of the Otapan General was wrought with protracted struggle, emotions shifting endlessly, unable to settle. Eventually, the old Priest sighed softly and gently patted his shoulder.

"My child, I have watched you grow since you were little. Your father died in the ongoing slaughter of war, your son in the disease that followed the siege's famine. Generation after generation of Otomi have perished in war and famine. We have struggled to maintain the heritage of our clan in the north, battling wave upon wave of invaders. For the continuity of our tribe, everything can be sacrificed. Even our precious beliefs are a measurable cost... how could they be an exception?"

Hearing this, Jiowar was shocked as he looked at the usually devout old Priest. A turmoil of emotions churned in his chest. His whole being was inflamed, wanting to cry out, but in the end, he suddenly lost strength and knelt before Xiulote.

Xiulote once again looked deeply at the old Priest. Then, the young Priest nodded gravely, placing the silver amulet around Jiowar's neck and then taking hold of his hair.

"Jiowar, in the presence of the Chief Divine, you will swear an oath to Him, obtaining the sacred duty to illuminate the glory of the Chief Divine! Come, chant His divine name with me, Huitzilopochtli..."

"Huitzilopochtli..."

Jiowar's face showed no luster. In the presence of the new deity, he had lost his steadfast faith and also the defiant pride in his heart, like a coyote being tamed.

Xiulote watched Jiowar's expression and nodded in satisfaction.

"Jiowar, let go of everything in the past, I promise you a future!"

The weathered Priest turned away, not looking at the scene until the end of the conversion ritual.

The sky gradually darkened, and the oath ceremony neared its end. Once again, the old and young priests stood facing each other, gazing into each other's faces.

"Olte, why did you choose me?" Xiulote looked at the old Priest before him, who seemed to have aged even more.

"Your Highness, I have observed you for a long time, gathered much information. I have witnessed your rapid growth and seen a boundless future." Olte replied calmly.

Xiulote was silent for a moment before asking again.

"Why choose me?"

"As the situation in the world changes, everything will transform. Out of necessity, you will be the hope for the continuity of the Otomi people." After pondering for a moment, Olte gave the answer in his heart.

"Why?" the young man asked.



This time, Olte thought for a long time. Only after a while did he slowly respond.

"Because... you are not a ruler without principles... you are a... trustworthy good person."

Xiulote was silent for a long time. At last, he waved his hand and turned to leave. Behind him, Olte gave a deep bow.

The mutual oath was formally signed. Under the profound twilight, the envoy group of the Otomi hastened away. Xiulote sat in the big tent, silently watching the darkening sky, lost in long thoughts. Light and darkness interwove repeatedly in the young man's heart, weaving a blended grey. Behind him, Bertade stood quietly, having witnessed the vicissitudes of the world.

The Mexica army waited for another two days. An eight-thousand-strong Xiquipilli legion marched out from Otapan City, led by Jiowar, officially joining the Northern Route Army of the Mexica.

Xiulote, leading his escort, was overjoyed to welcome the Otapan legion, but was at a loss for words for a moment. Among the legion promised by the old Priest Olte, only three thousand were lean samurai capable of battle. As for the remaining five thousand Otomi militiamen, each was skinny and bony, with sunken eyes from hunger, likely not having had a full meal for months.

The Young Commander watched for a moment and shook his head with a wry smile. These militiamen could only be used as laborers and would need sufficient food, at least half a month of nurturing, no wonder the old Priest agreed so readily. However, the shipping capacity of the Mexica's Naval Forces was limited, and there were not enough laborers in the Northern Route Army. With these people, many miscellaneous tasks could be handled. Some labor-intensive siege engines began to appear in his mind, like tower cars that fully utilized the range advantage and complex structure, as well as mounds built up for high platforms.

Having achieved their objective, the Mexica's grand army then turned back south, returning to the wooden fort on the banks of the Lerma River. The Otomi were dispersed and settled in two camps far from the main fort. The warriors of Otapan maintained an independent organization, self-contained. The five thousand militiamen were organized to cut down forest trees and produce siege engines. The continuous rain kept falling, but the intensity began to lessen. The rainy season had passed its peak, and new opportunities for battle were brewing.

Time hurried on, and in the blink of an eye, it was September. Tarasco's fleet returned from the west, bringing full shiploads of Chapala reinforcements. Seeing the gradually gathering enemy, Xiulote felt some anxiety. He dispatched a large number of scouts to keep watch on the southern banks at all times.

On another clear morning, after completing his morning exercises, Xiulote went up to the ramparts to gaze into the distance. The rain was gradually clearing and the clouds thinning. Under the gradually emerging sunlight, the vast Mexica fleet finally appeared once more from the east of the great river.

#### Chapter 335 - Luring the Enemy Again

September sun spread across the earth, the rainfall noticeably decreased, becoming sporadic. It was the beginning of the harvest season. Under the warm tropical climate, the early-ripening pumpkins had already been harvested, the mature cowpeas were about to be reaped, and the blooming corn swayed in the fields. A gust of wind swept past, leaving the mountain wilderness lush and verdant, scattering the ripe aroma of various fruits. Yet, when it reached the banks of the Lerma River, all that could be seen was desolation and solemnity.

The main force of Annatri's fleet, along with a large contingent of reinforcements, had arrived, with the new batch of the Capital City's food supply accompanying them.

Eight thousand Spear Legionnaires disembarked at the port in succession, gathering in squad formations. The Militia were fully armed, donning Paper Armor, tightly fastening their Rattan Helmets, carrying shields on their backs, and tightly clutching bronze spears in their hands as they curiously surveyed both banks of the great river. Guzman did the same, as a miner and farmer since childhood, he

had never ventured beyond fifty miles from his hometown. On this unfamiliar land, he stood subconsciously straight, sticking close to his comrades. His gaze intently followed the approaching banner of His Highness and the Legion Commander who was hastening forward to salute.

Xiulote smiled as he lifted "Monkey" Kuluka from the ground, patting his shoulder affectionately.

"Monkey, it's been a long time, you've become much sturdier. You did very well with the last bronze mine purchase! How has the Spear Legion's training been this time?"

Kuluka nodded respectfully, his eyes bright. In the presence of His Highness, he subconsciously scratched his head and replied with a smile.

"Respected sovereign, I have always missed your teachings, never daring to forget your commands for a moment. These days, I have been practicing with the Legion, sometimes even joining the ranks to feel it. Over the months, the Spear Formations can now quickly disperse and form. The formations move and change direction at a slower speed to maintain their shape. As for the column charge you mentioned in your letter, I've tried it a few times and will continue to explore it with the Adjutant Ezpan."

Xiulote nodded. He looked at the orderly new troops gathering on the riverbank, his smile growing more pronounced. Then, turning to Ezpan, who was kneeling in salute behind Kuluka, he cracked a joke.

"Ezpan, now we are on your turf. A fish back in its pond might slip away before you realize... You're more familiar with the local culture and geography here, you'll have to give me more advice!"

Hearing His Highness's words, Ezpan didn't hesitate, prostrating himself on the ground. Then, he raised his left hand, missing parts of his little finger, and spoke earnestly.

"Your Highness, the Chief Divine as my witness, my loyalty to you is unwavering, willing to give my life at any moment! The fish has landed, and from now on, it is the wolfhound following the King. I am ready to give my all for the expedition westward!"

Xiulote watched Ezpan's expression for a while, then also laughed as he lifted him up, praising him loudly.

"Excellent! This is your vast realm where you will make a great impact!"

Afterward, Xiulote looked again at Kuluka, who had gathered closer.

"Monkey, how is your cooperation with Ezpan?"

With a moment's thought, Kuluka replied with a clear smile.

"Sovereign, Ezpan is an outstanding deputy commander, the most critical pillar of the Legion!"

Only then did Xiulote nod again. He smiled and asked about another matter.

"Where is the Mayan merchant Tikalo now? How is the situation?"

After pondering, Kuluka gave a bow and reported.

"According to the reports from those close to Tikalo, he is now being directed by the Royal Family's Intelligence Officer, serving as the communication channel between the southern Weytamo state and the Alliance. The Alliance has already sent two envoys, and the Chieftains of Weytamo have been persuaded by the terms of the Alliance to remain neutral in the war. The trade of the bronze mine continues, but the management rights are now in the hands of the Royal Family."

Xiulote pondered for a moment, then slightly nodded. . The bronze mines, as the most crucial strategic resources, surely needed to be managed directly by the central authority. Now it seems that the Royal Family line was resolved to secure the bronze mines of Weytamo.

While they conversed, the Spear Legion had completely disembarked, followed by tribal Hunters in plain clothes, carrying Longbows.

Xiulote looked towards the riverbank. These mountain Hunters moved with steady strides, nonchalant about the rough weather they faced along the way. Being accustomed to fishing and hunting, most were familiar with boating. At this moment, they gathered by tribe, following the calls of their Chieftains, somewhat disorganized but busy without chaos.

"Black Wolf" Toltec strode forward with his head held high, marching towards the banner of His Highness. With a few steps, he knelt on one knee.

"Your Highness, Toltec greets you! May your conquest be smooth, and may you have enduring martial fortune!"

Xiulote laughed heartily, pulling Toltec up from the ground, and asked with a smile.

"My Black Wolf, how is the state of the forces? Has the journey been smooth?"

"Your Highness, we had favorable winds and rain all the way, refreshingly so! We are ready to fight at any moment and bring you the hearts of our enemies!"

Toltec spoke with confidence, and then confidently glanced at Kuluka.

Xiulote observed everything, patting his beloved commander's shoulder and giving a quiet command.

"Well done! Toltec, bring your books and come to my tent tonight."

Toltec was momentarily petrified, speechless. Kuluka quickly glanced at him, a slight smile on his face.

Xiulote turned his gaze back to the riverbank; the Militia had all disembarked, followed by ships loaded with food. With all sides gathered, he now had a Mexica army of thirty thousand at his command! Twenty thousand were Samurais from various places, plus ten thousand elite Militia. In the end, there was also an Otomi Legion whose combat effectiveness was halved.

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Almost forty thousand people gathered at this location, consuming tens of thousands of catties of food daily, piled up like mountains. Even if a fleet brought in a batch of new food, it could only sustain them for two to three months. It was increasingly difficult to maintain the supply line, and he could no longer afford to wait. These legions were also the largest forces he could muster. The Holy City had emptied its coffers, investing everything here.

The northern general had promised reinforcements, but they had yet to arrive. According to the Envoy's recent report, Osellor had crushed the Chichimeca Canine Descendants on the northern frontier, annihilating more than ten southern migrating tribes. He had constructed pyramids one after another along the northern border, deterring all passing tribes and transporting a large number of captives to the Capital City. He had also recruited many surrendered weaker tribes, promising the Envoy to send support as much as possible.

"Now everything is ready, just waiting for the battle to commence!"

Xiulote's gaze crossed the riverbank, looking at the wide Lerma River, then toward the distant south.

In the following days, the returning Mexica Naval Forces quickly engaged in combat, fighting continuous battles with the Tarasco Naval Forces at the rivermouth fortress.

The Tarasco Naval Forces, in small units, repeatedly launched attacks, harassing the Mexica's food transport ships. The Alliance's Naval Forces also dispersed in small squads, patrolling and escorting. On the long Lerma River, one could often see a dozen small boats, flying different flags, entangled with each other, fighting exhausting battles on the water. Spears stabbed, War Clubs swung, arrows shot powerfully, Daggers pierced. Every day, both sides suffered dozens of casualties, dots of red blossoming across the river.

Facing the enemy's harassment, Xiulote was somewhat troubled. He was reluctant to let his elite Samurai be consumed in these skirmishes, so he had elite Militia of Longbow and Spear board the ships, leading the enemy forces in attrition under the Samurai's leadership, also allowing the Longbow Militia to hone their shooting skills on the water.

The Hunter tribes showcased their precise close-range archery on the water. Leveraging the advantage of bows and arrows, the Alliance's engagements gradually began winning more than losing. The Tarasco people learned from the combat, also gradually becoming familiar with the Mexica's archery tactics, and began equipping a large number of rattan wood shields in the Naval Forces.

As the skies cleared gradually, new gunpowder weapons were released from the stores, distributed to Longbow Warriors and Militia. In a secret mountain camp, they familiarized themselves with the shooting of gunpowder arrows, waiting for the great battle to arrive.

On clear days, Xiulote gathered the Naval Forces multiple times, challenging the southern rivermouth fortress to combat. But the enemy's fleet, like scattered packs of wolves, continued to harass the rear and did not engage in direct battle.

Facing this situation, Xiulote unfolded the map and pointed several times to the west. Three thousand Ottopan Warriors were then transported by a naval force to the downstream west. Jiowar contacted the Otomi Tribe along both banks of the great river, forming over a dozen small squads that plundered all the way west from Saka, gradually nearing the edges of the Chapala Lake Region.

This fleet and Ottopan Warriors were merely pawns to lure the enemy. The real main strength of the fleet, under the guidance of the Otomi Tribe on the North Coast, came to a downstream bend less than a hundred miles northwest of the rivermouth fortress, at Lake Yuriria.



Xiulote personally led the fleet to survey the area. Here, downstream of the rivermouth fortress, it took only a day or two to arrive with the current, and three to four days to return upstream. The north bank of the river and lake, located between Guamare and Ottopan, was a rare flat woodland, with several Otomi villages where troops could be stationed and rested. The southern bank was the Saka being plundered. The area had a broad river surface and smooth water flow, providing ample space for movement, perfect for a major battle.

Looking at the reed-thick north bank of the river and lake, the Young Commander finally nodded in satisfaction. The main fleet silently moved, transporting large numbers of troops and supplies here several times. The Samurai then disembarked, settling in the Otomi villages, blocking the surrounding passages, and sternly forbidding pedestrians to pass. The main strength of the fleet then lay quietly in ambush here.

The Otomi village on the North Coast was in silence, while the Tarasco Territory on the south bank was ablaze with war. Guided by the local Otomi people, the Ottopan Warriors precisely attacked the nobles' manors across the region. The local nobility resisted with all their might, but the regional Samurai had been conscripted by the Kingdom, and many of the Militia had also been mobilized. The nobility had to hurriedly gather peasants, only to be swiftly scattered by the attacking Otomi Warriors.

In just a few days, the western sky was marked with trails of black smoke—burning villages, scorched fields, and nobles' manors reduced to ashes. Outside the manors, the Otomi people hung the ruthlessly executed Tarasco nobility as if in protest.

The defeated local nobility fled southward, carrying the news of the Otomi invasion to the kingdom's heartland. Messengers rapidly relayed the news, and a continuous stream of alarms reached the ears of the Northern Marshal and the Naval Commander, Ospey.

"Crocodile" nobility's eyes bulged, quite shocked.

"The Otomi people have joined the war, and in alliance with the Mexica fleet, relying on the Otomi Tribes along both banks, they plundered the residences of various nobility!"

Hearing this news, Ospey hesitated, sensing a scent of conspiracy.

According to the Scout's report, the North Coast had noticeably received new Mexica reinforcements, numbering around ten thousand. Considering this, the experienced commander hesitated for a long time, still opting to keep a defensive stance.

However, upon hearing the alarm, the five thousand Chapala Warriors in the rivermouth fortress clamored to go to battle. Worrying about the Otomi people raiding their homeland further downstream and underestimating the Otomi's combat strength, they wanted to go west to aid the situation.

Chapter 337 - Luring the Enemy Again\_3

Facing the demands made by the Chapala Legion, Ospe firmly shook his head in refusal.

"Respected 'Feathers' Pengguari, I cannot agree to your request for troops."

The Commander of Chapala, Pengguari, was nearly forty. He had a dignified appearance with gracious manners and wore a splendid feathered garment. His name, meaning "Feathers," clearly indicated his highly noble birth. Hearing the words of the northern Marshal, he too shook his head.

"Respected 'Crocodile' Marshal, the Chapala Legion has traveled hundreds of miles to assist, and our loyalty to the Kingdom is as clear as day and night. We came here to fight bravely, not to sit idle in a fortress! Now, the nobility from the western Saka region are constantly coming forth with complaints. They and the Legion's commanders are related, and the samurai are worried about the safety of their

homes in the Lake Region. They are infuriated by the enemies' massacre of the Nobility and can no longer wait!"

Ospe remained silent, feeling the heavy pressure, as defense was never his style. After contemplating for a moment, the rational part prevailed, and the "Crocodile" Commander still shook his head.

"Penguari, the enemy's intelligence isn't clear, and the King has ordered us to hold our position. I am the northern Marshal and bear the responsibility of overseeing the entire situation; now is not the time for battle."

Upon hearing this, Penguari slightly bowed his head, speaking coldly.

"Ospe, if the enemy's intelligence isn't clear, we should immediately seek clarification. You are the northern Marshal, but our Chapala Legion is independent, representing the autonomous Lake Region. You bear the overall responsibility, while we have local responsibilities. The Legion came to support the Kingdom and protect our homeland. If even the weaker Otomi can roam the south with impunity, then defending the Kingdom is merely empty talk!"

At this point, Penguari paused for a moment, then seriously added.

"If you persist in refusing to send troops, our 5,000 Chapala samurai will march out on our own to provide support! I will leave 10,000 Militia at the Rivermouth fortress. Akanbaro State still has 6,000 samurai and 20,000 Militia, enough to keep the defense."

Upon hearing Penguari's words, Ospe was greatly troubled.

These regional Great Nobility possessed their own private troops, had prestigious ranks, and were each incredibly headstrong, valuing their home properties above all else. The last time the Great Nobility of Akanbaro marched out independently, dispersing Mexica raiding parties, they ended up ambushed by enemy forces, losing nearly a thousand samurai and over three thousand Militia. This attack by the Otomi was clearly a repetition of the same strategy.

As the Legion Commander of Chapala, Pengguari had 5,000 samurai and nearly 10,000 Militia under his command, a force not much different from that of the northern legions. In terms of status, the "Feathers" was a long-exalted member of the Nobility, which he could not strictly suppress with rank. Now, with the northern border still awaiting the next batch of Chapala reinforcements, he was even less able to restrain them.

As the northern Marshal, he couldn't enforce strict obedience in the troops. If he allowed the Chapala Legion to march by land, their slow progress would fail to intercept the enemy force transported by the Naval Forces. The most likely outcome would be an ambush by the main force of Mexica samurai, resulting in heavy losses.

At this very moment, the Otomi forces raiding downstream were already significantly affecting the fortress's morale, as well as undoubtedly impacting the arrival of the next batch of reinforcements. He had no choice but to alter the original defense plan and take action to eliminate this enemy force first.

After pondering for a long time, Ospe finally stared into Pengguari's eyes and said sternly.

"Feathers of Chapala, if you march out alone and encounter the main force of the Mexica, your destruction is certain! The fierce Mexica samurai are drastically different from the Otomi. Wait a few days, let me investigate the military situation on the North Coast, and then we can discuss the matter of dispatching troops together!"

## Chapter 338 - Battle of Lake Yuriria Part 1

Time rushed by, and before long it was the end of September. The weather became ever clearer, and in the fields, the corn had produced fully grown ears, the final harvest was about to arrive.

Standing on the walls of the Rivermouth fortress, Ospe looked out at the flowing Lerma River, but could not see any trace of the Mexica naval fleet.

He furrowed his brow and sank into deep thought. According to the latest reconnaissance by the scouts, the enemy camp on the North Coast was brimming with warriors donned in armor, Pike Warriors, and many toiling Militia. On the wooden fort at its center, the flag of the Mexica Holy City's lineage fluttered high. The number of the enemy warriors amounted to tens of thousands, seemingly no different from before.

"But the main force of the enemy's naval forces is nowhere to be found."

The "Crocodile" nobility tilted his head up to the brilliant sky and murmured to himself.

After hesitating for a long time, "Turkey" Kukuna, standing by his side, still spoke up to offer advice.

"Respected Commander Ospe, the Mexica Commander-in-Chief on the other side is not to be underestimated. The main force of the enemy's naval forces might not have returned to the east but is probably lying in ambush somewhere downstream, ready to ambush either the supporting land or naval forces at any moment!"

Ospe's eyes rounded in surprise, and he said loudly.

"Turkey, I have fought old battles, do I need you to teach me this? The Otomi on the North Coast know the terrain well; they can hide the Mexica warriors and naval forces anywhere. The Otomi Warriors harrying our forces downstream are merely bait. The fisherman is right behind, waiting for us to take the bait!"

Facing the marshal's formidable presence from the North, Kukuna's expression tensed. He nodded repeatedly and continued to advise in a quiet voice.

"Commander, why must we fight desperately against the Mexica? They dare not advance deeply from the Sakapu army and expose their lengthy supply lines. We should just stay in the fortress and wait for the enemy to come attack!"

At those words, Ospe's face showed anger, a roar escaping him—though this rage was not directed at Kukuna.

"The feathered warriors of Chapala clamor for battle every day, and I can barely contain them! More and more executed nobility, wave upon wave of regional leaders fleeing to us, all requesting that I dispatch troops to expel the ravaging Otomi! Even the officers under my command are calling for battle! If I don't fight now, by the time this war is over, I will have completely lost the support of the regional nobility. By then, even the King may not be able to protect me, nor might he wish to!"

Hearing these ominous words laced with profound meaning, Kukuna paused with a stunned look. He pondered for a moment, then spoke with trepidation.

"Commander, the enemy's Longbows are fearsome! Faced with their archery advantage, we cannot be assured of victory in a naval battle!"

Upon saying this, Ospe's anger gradually subsided. Still looking up, he laughed loudly with self-satisfaction.

"I was personally shot by an enemy Greatbow warrior, how could I not be prepared?"

The "Crocodile" commander turned, looking towards a burly warrior not far behind. This was the bloodied hero who captured the Mexica Longbow during the last pursuit.

"Qingyu Kulucha, I entrusted you with the renovation of all the large boats; are they all completed now?"

Kulucha's face was stern, his demeanor fierce. He now respectfully bowed his head and answered.

"Respected Commander, thousands of Militia have worked day and night, and all four hundred old-style large boats have been remodeled and are ready for battle at any time!"

At this news, Ospe nodded with satisfaction. He looked at Kukuna and issued an order in a clear voice.

"Kukuna, stay with the Militia and guard the fortress well! Don't worry about the enemy's Longbows; I have deliberately kept the large boats from battle to give the Mexica a surprise!"

Afterwards, the "Crocodile" noble looked up at the clear sky again and laughed aloud confidently.

"Since the fisherman wants to fish, let them hook a crocodile and see who ends up eating whom!"

The next day, the water gates of the Rivermouth Fortress opened wide, and the Tarasco Naval Forces finally launched a major offensive. After a sweeping recruitment in the Chapala Lake Region, Ospe now had a total of four hundred large boats and over a thousand small boats at his command! He brought together all the northern warships and led eight thousand warriors, including the Chapala Legion, along with more than ten thousand Militia and over six thousand sailors. The whole army surged forth, flowing westward downstream.

The marshal of the North was full of bold enthusiasm. He held the upper hand both in upstream position and in ship and troop strength. Now he was about to cut off the Mexica naval forces' path home, launching a major battle intended to annihilate the predicted enemy naval forces' main strength!

A light boat raced with the most urgent news. Soon, within the Mexica fleet at Lake Yuriria, Xiulote sprang to his feet. He looked towards the fiery red sunset, as well as to the upstream southeast of the great river, where the enemy's naval forces were only a day's distance away.

The Young Commander felt a surge of surprise; he did not anticipate that the opponent's commander would be so decisive. When he moved, it was with the entire army pressing forward, as swift as a Thunderbolt! He rapidly convened the warriors stationed on shore and called back the raiding squadrons on the South Coast overnight, consolidating all his strength, ready for battle.



A day later, the Mexica naval forces had fully convened on Lake Yuriria. Xiulote commanded three hundred large boats and nearly a thousand smaller ones, prepared for battle. The mighty fleet, carrying eight thousand elite warriors, three thousand Longbow Militia, five thousand ordinary sailors, and over three hundred hastily summoned Otomi Warriors, stood solemnly waiting on the calm lake surface.

As the autumn sun rose halfway into the sky, pouring golden sunlight down, the boundless Tarasco fleet appeared from the southeast upstream. By an unspoken agreement between the two commanders, the two mightiest fleets in Central America finally encountered each other at the end of September, on Lake Yuriria's waters. The decisive battle that would determine the fate of the world had arrived!

The fleets of both sides gradually drew closer, with the commanders' flags in distant sight of each other. To the southeast flew the crocodile banner, symbolizing the primal crocodile Xipactli, devourer of the earth. To the northwest danced the Black Wolf banner, representing Xiulotel, the Mexica God of Death, guardian of the illuminating sky. Crocodile versus Black Wolf, the colossal fleets obscured the whole of Lake Yuriria, War Clubs and Copper Spears gleamed coldly; this would be a battle of mythic proportions!

#### Chapter 339 - Battle of Lake Yuriria Part 2

Xiulote stood resolutely on the flagship's divine altar, his expression solemn and serious. He was dressed in full regalia, his head adorned with a dazzling feather crown, and behind him, a large flag was planted on the high platform. At this moment, the Young Commander swallowed imperceptibly as he gazed at the even larger fleet opposite him.

"Bertade, tell me, is this battle a bit too risky for me?"

Xiulote slightly tilted his head, looking towards the Head Warrior beside him, with a hint of nervousness.

Bertade's expression remained calm. He softly countered,

"Your Highness, this battle has been planned by you for a long time. After preparing so much, don't you have confidence in it?"

Upon hearing this, the Young Commander raised his head, looked up at the bright sky, and softly exclaimed,

"What a beautiful clear day!"

Then, Xiulote surveyed his fleet again—hundreds of large boats centered around the flagship, almost a thousand smaller boats interweaving through the flanks. The Samurai gripped their longbows and war clubs with solemn expressions, a reassuring force. Annatri stood proudly on a splendid large boat, long spear in hand, with the Deputy Marshal's flag waving behind her. Situated at the forefront of the fleet, she commanded the movement of the small boats with orderly precision—a Naval Commander to be trusted!

"The timing is advantageous, the forces nearly equal, and the army's morale is high,"

Xiulote pondered for a moment, then looked again at Bertade, his expression now steady. He finally nodded slowly, a confident smile on his face.

"In that case, let us then battle!"

On the calm surface of the lake, the opposing fleets gradually began to form their battle formations. In this era's naval warfare, the large canoe was the core of the battle formation, akin to a fierce crocodile.

Each large boat could carry up to forty people, having a clear advantage over the small craft. The small boats, meanwhile, swirled around the large boats like fish, agile and carrying eight people each.

The Mexica fleet's three hundred large boats were loosely arranged, the formation linearly stretched with not more than a few layers in thickness. The fleet was vast, divided into two clear formations. The commander of the front formation was the Naval Commander, with close-combat warriors outnumbering the longbowmen on the central large boats. The small boats on the flanks were filled with harassing longbow militia and sailors. The rear formation fluttered with the Commander-in-Chief's flag, a line of large boats spread out, densely packed with longbow warriors.

The Tarasco fleet consisted of four hundred large boats, the formation tight and well-trained. These boats stayed very close to each other, facilitating massed charging to hold localized battlefield advantage. The overall formation was not wide but very deep, like an arrow poised to be shot, a common naval battle formation for Naval Forces.

Sko stood proudly on the flagship in the center. He looked at the opposing formation and first laughed heartily in front of his officers.

"The Mexica do not understand naval warfare! With the gods' blessing, our forces are bound to win!"

Then, he conjectured within his heart, his face showing a smile. The enemy's naval forces were so arrayed probably to leverage the power of archery, but he was well prepared.

The outset of the naval battle was small boats probing. Hundreds of small boats sped forward, colliding and tumbling in front of both fleets' large boats.

In the center of the battleground, hundreds of small boats had no escape and crashed into each other with a "bang". Militia and sailors quickly picked up their weapons, shouting loudly and fighting vigorously. Spears clashed with short daggers, occasionally bursts of blood flowering, staining the clear lake water. Sharp weapons "plunged" into flesh, screams and cries of pain were incessant, as warriors from both sides entangled and died together.

On the flanking sides of the battleground, the Mexica's small boats maneuvered flexibly, and the tribal hunters fully utilized the advantage of close-range archery. "Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!" With twenty steps apart, several tribal hunters on the small boats released their arrows at once. The arrow light flashed like electricity, instantly piercing through gaps in the enemies' shields. Two Tarasco paddlers fell immediately, splashing a boatful of blood, and the boat suddenly lost speed. The militia on board had no choice but to put down their copper spears and clumsily row nearer, only to be mercilessly shot down again.

After observing for a moment from the flagship, Sko slightly frowned.

The Tarascos' small boats had shields installed on both sides, but they could not fully cover them. The enemy's archery was extremely precise, resulting in a noticeably greater loss on their part. In the small boat combat, the Naval Forces gradually fell at a disadvantage.

Realizing that the small boats couldn't achieve victory, the "Crocodile" Nobility didn't hesitate. He waved his command flag, ordering the large boats to close in. The war drums sounded, and Tarasco's large boats finally took action, revealing their potency. All large boats were refitted, with a large number of wooden shields nailed on both sides and wooden sheds constructed on top to shield against powerful longbows.

Dozens of Tarasco large boats rushed forward first, with hundreds of arrows "bang bang" nailed to the shields and wooden canopies, but unable to cause any damage. The Mexica small boats had to quickly retreat and scatter.

In the distant rear of the Mexica, Xiulote stood on the high platform of the large boat, seeing the small boats in the front unable to disperse, and the enemy's large boats coming on strongly. He hesitated for a moment and finally saw clearly the rebuilt form of the enemy's large boats. The Young Commander was slightly stunned, then his face lit up with joy and he laughed heartily.

"What a surprise! In this battle, the enemy commander should take the credit!"

The cluster of Tarasco large boats gradually approached, closing in on the Mexica fleet to about a hundred steps. As an unusually loud bugle sounded, the enemy's fleet of large boats suddenly exerted force, the paddlers straining to row and starting to charge!

Annatri quickly waved the spear flag, the sound of retreat trumpeted, and the quick Mexica small boats agilely fled in reverse, while the loosely organized large boats also began to turn backward.

Ospei was secretly puzzled, as the morale of the Mexica naval forces was still strong and they wouldn't collapse at the slightest touch. He waved the command flag, preparing to mobilize fast small boats to attack and restrain the enemy.

A faint glimmer of firelight suddenly flickered across the water. Mexica's large boats had already crossed their hulls, a row of archers drew their bowstrings and then notched arrows to shoot strongly, the low "humming" sound rising. Then, thousands of fire arrows with just-lit paper casings, like burning meteors, swiftly attacked! The fire arrows traveled over a distance of more than fifty steps, nailed on the wooden hulls, wooden shields, and wooden canopies. The continuous "du-du" sound was sharp and piercing, like the proclamation of the God of Death!

Then, Ospei knew what truly dazzling meteors were, what brilliant and magnificent fireworks were! Countless flames burst into fire, the bright light stinging the eyes. The scorching smoke rapidly rose,

bringing the scent of burning sulfur, resembling the mouth of a demon spewing smoke from a western volcano!

In just a moment, the "Crocodile" commander's vision was already filled with an unforgettable blaze. The canopies were burning, shields were burning, large boats were burning, Samurai clad in Leather Armor were burning, Militia dressed in cloth were burning... everything was on fire, this was a world of burning death! Samurai and Militia alike became human torches, issuing sky-wide mournful screams, desperately jumping into the lake. And even on the splash-specked lake surface, there were burning fire arrows scattered.

The sound of slicing air "whizz" rose, Mexica's fire arrows came soaring again. But in just a few moments, even more fierce flames exploded across the sky, igniting dozens of Tarasco large boats once again!

Facing this sudden explosive attack, the Tarasco Naval Forces instantly fell into shock and fear. The surging flames burned fiercely, the acrid smoke engulfed the boats, and the exploding fire arrows could even float on the water surface! Samurai, Militia, and Sailors lost their voices momentarily, then began to scream in uncontrollable terror.

"The enemy has summoned the gods, the foreign Fire God has descended!"

The Samurai were frantic on the boats, looking toward the Commander-in-Chief's flagship, praying for their own gods to appear.

"These are demons of the western volcanoes, they will devour everything!"

The Militia trembled, dropped their weapons, and crawled on the deck, hiding from the choking smoke.

"These are sprites of fire, able to burn on water!"

The Sailors turned fearfully, ready to desperately flee, but they collided with the large boat in the rear.

Only the experienced officers were slightly composed. They identified the scent of the smoke, recalling the flames from the Priest's prayers. Then, they thought of the title of the opposite commander, and finally came to a realization, shouting hoarsely.

"It's the God of Death! He uses Netherfire!"

At that moment, the myth became vivid in everyone's minds, dominating all their spirits. This was an era of ignorance, with many myths preserved. Nearby, Jiowar, aboard the same ship, was equally stunned. He looked at the flames that didn't belong to this era, murmuring incredulously.

"Primordial God, could it be that youngster... no, could it be that my elder brother truly possesses divine power?!"

The raging fire burned on the lake, the surging heat waves transformed into strong winds, fluttering the Mexica commander's flag. Under the dazzling sunlight, the Black Wolf on the flag roared skyward, while the commander beneath the flag glittered brilliantly. Xiulote's expression was solemn, like the embodiment of a god, remaining in everyone's heart!

Chapter 340 - Battle of Lake Yuriria Part 2

The nearby heatwave, carrying thick smoke, attacked swiftly, staining the flag of the Tarasco Marshal a quick gray, like the swiftly deteriorating battle situation.

Underneath the flag, the Naval Commander, Sko, was equally shocked and pale. He widened his eyes, staring blankly ahead at the great fire, momentarily paralyzed by fear. Moments later, the seasoned commander's self-control enabled him to rapidly regain his composure.

Then, the "Crocodile" nobility surveyed the battle situation, feeling a chill in his heart.

The main force of the Tarasco fleets were stuck in chaotic stagnation. The Mexica relentlessly fired flashing fire arrows, continuously fueling roaring flames, also igniting the critical warships constantly! During his shocked stupor, dozens of warships lost their fighting capabilities. The surrounding samurais were all in disarray, the military officers at all levels waiting for the flagship's response, and time was of the essence!

Watching the scene before him, Sko's expression rapidly changed. Facing the unknown fear, he hesitated for a few breaths, once thinking of fleeing eastward. But after those few breaths, he thought of the consequences of retreating from battle and the difficulty of escaping against the current... Here and now, it was do or die!

After a moment of weighing his options, the "Crocodile" nobility suppressed his bone-deep fear, and his brave nature finally took over. Suddenly feeling vicious, he bit hard into his lip, roaring loudly amidst the sting and the taste of blood.

"I am the descendant of the gods, with the bloodline of the primeval crocodile, even divine power cannot harm me!"



The supreme commander's roar echoed over the lake, lifting the spirits of the frightened samurais around him. Then, he looked towards the brave Kulucha beside him.

"Green Fish, beat the drums for me! Command the entire army to advance, continue the charge!"

Kulucha fiercely nodded, banging the resounding war drums. The "Crocodile" nobility himself shook the war flag, spinning it toward the front.

"Charge! Charge at them! Engage them in close combat! They won't be able to fire their arrows again!"

The awe-inspiring sound of the war drums began, and the giant crocodile's flag fluttered. Sko looked around again, around his flagship, the inner hundred or so warships gradually regained command, while the outer hundred or so warships were still trapped in disorder. Ahead of him, nearly a hundred warships burned fiercely, becoming bright massive torches. Behind him, the noble Chapala Feather still looked panic-stricken, standing blankly at the prow.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh," the fire arrows came again, lighting up more than ten additional outer warships. The "Crocodile" nobility had no time to wait, he sharply ordered the closest trusted aide.

"Quick! You board the small boat, quickly find Chapala Feather, tell him to gather the chaotic fleet and rapidly follow my assault. Inform him, the naval forces' main strength is still here, we still have a chance for victory!"

Afterwards, Sko, with blood on his corner of the lip, roared fiercely like a ferocious crocodile.

"Brave samurais, follow me in the charge!"

Leading with the commander's flag, the cry was mournful, and the war drums thundered. The flag of Tarasco slowly started moving, bypassing the burning vanguard, then suddenly accelerated. The marshal's warship, unstoppable, personally leading over a hundred warships, resolutely charged towards the nearby enemy fleet.

Watching the rapidly recovering enemy flagship, watching the fierce charging of over a hundred warships, Xiulote looked on appreciatively, loudly praising.

"Truly a brave crocodile!"

Thereupon, on the divine platform, the Young Commander again waved the command flag, and the Longbow Warriors in the rear immediately adjusted their direction, and a sky full of fire arrows shot towards the attacking fleet. Moments later, the fire arrows whistling into the dispersed enemy fleet, again lighting more than ten charging warships on fire.

A strong breeze passed, dispersing the rising smoke, clearing the view. The Tarasco flagship paused slightly, then adjusted its direction, heading straight at the Mexica Commander-in-Chief's flag.

Watching the abruptly approaching enemy fleet, Xiulote remained unmoved. He continued to command the rear, steadily shooting. The Young Commander's figure stood resolute under the flag, becoming the focal point of the entire battlefield.

Watching the enemy naval flagship, Bertade's eyes narrowed. He stepped forward, raising his longbow. A trusted aide beside him lit the paper casing of the fire arrow, quickly handing it over. The Head Warrior turned sideways, placing the arrow on the bow, pulling back forcefully to its limit, then swiftly launching it. The weighty fire arrow flickered as it flew across sixty to seventy steps, embedding itself accurately in the enemy ship's wooden shelter, then burst into flames.

Sko's flagship suddenly caught fire, with the family samurais aboard showing panic, about to step forward to extinguish it. The "Crocodile" nobility, face flushed, strode forward, pushing the burning wooden shelter into the lake. Then, holding a shield high, he bellowed.

"Get rowing! Don't stop! Follow me in the charge!"

After issuing the command, Sko widened his eyes, staring hard at the enemy flagship just ahead, the hope for a turnaround! Then, his eyes glittering, he stared intently at the grand figure below the commander's flag, roaring deeply.

"Trusted aide, shield cover! Green Fish, bring me my longbow, and get one for yourself too!"

Under the Black Wolf's flag, Bertade was about to launch another fire arrow when his expression suddenly changed. Across fifty to sixty steps, the enemy flagship's shields were suddenly lowered, revealing a rugged, strong middle-aged samurai. In his hands, he held a Mexica longbow, already steadied and aimed, the shining copper arrow gleaming coldly. Behind him, another fierce samurai stood sideways, also holding a bow.

Seeing this, the Head Warrior didn't hesitate to drop his longbow, then flung himself to the side.

Xiulote, smiling, surveyed the greatly favourable situation on the battlefield, contemplating envelopment maneuvers. Then, a pair of solid arms enveloped him from behind, the Young Commander suddenly felt a force on his back, in an instant before he could react, forced him down.