

Civilization 431

Chapter 431 - To the Master - Part 3

At that moment, a sharp conch horn suddenly sounded from beneath the Black Wolf's banner. Following that, Head Warrior Bertade hurried out of formation, grabbing hold of the Toltec who awaited battle.

"His Highness orders, Toltec to return to the ranks! Surrender the chance of a duel to another brave warrior!"

Toltec struggled unwillingly in the grip of the Head Warrior. He turned his head forcefully, looking towards the small hill nearby. Beneath the fluttering flag, His Highness nodded affirmatively with a solemn expression. Only then did Black Wolf lower his head, not looking at the surely mocking Hound opposite him, and dejectedly returned to the ranks.

Yuku, however, did not reveal a smile. His expressionless face watched as his intended prey departed, then he closed his eyes slightly, motionless, waiting for a new hunting target.

Before long, a towering Mexica warrior stepped out of formation. He held his head high, proudly shouting towards the front.

"Guardian of the War God! I, the warrior from the land of Tollocan, heir to the honorable nobility, the valiant 'Black Panther' Yomak, challenge the 'Hound' Yuku of Tarasco! Remember, the one who will slay you is Yomak!"

Yuku slowly opened his eyes, taking a careful look at the opponent's exceptionally tall stature and the calves that his shield could not cover. He nodded slowly, set down his shield, and clasped the nearly

two-meter-long Copper Spear with both hands, pointing it diagonally forward. Relaxing his left hand forward while firmly gripping with his right hand in the back, he spread his legs, bending them slightly, and stood waiting silently.

The thunderous war drums sounded once more. Yomak raised his shield, gripping his War Club, and took several large steps forward. His eyes were tightly fixed on Yuku, but he saw no sign of movement from his opponent, as if facing a frozen sculpture. The burly warrior continued to advance, leaving deep impressions in the earth beneath him. He was confident in his tremendous strength, unmatched within his homeland of Tollocan.

Soon, the two were only five steps apart. Yomak thrust the shield in his left hand forward and furiously swung the War Club in his right, pouncing towards his shield-less enemy in front!

In that lightning-fast moment, Yuku finally struck! A glint in his eyes, he stepped diagonally with a loose left hand pushing down, and a firm right hand lifting up. Then, with a mighty forward push from his right hand, striking against his partially relaxed left, his hands met in a precise and savage thrust!

The gleaming spearhead traced a suddenly intense arc, "Phut!" it plunged into Yomak's calf. The advancing opponent's burly figure suddenly stumbled, his hand on the shield instinctively pressing downwards. "Screech!" The Copper Spear swiftly retracted alongside the shield, emitting a grating sound. Then came another "Phut!"

A slight smile finally appeared on Yuku's statue-like face. "Thud!" He kicked on his opponent's shield, and with the rebounding force, pulled back the sharp spear from the enemy's body. Shield and War Club fell with a clatter, and the burly Yomak fell backward like a fragile Maya reed toy, facing upwards. He struggled to lift his arms, pressing on the bleeding neck, with bright red blood bubbling out from the large hole above his collarbone. Soon, endless darkness emerged from the blood, mercilessly engulfing him.

Yuku planted the Copper Spear on the ground, turned around, and bowed respectfully to the King. After that, he calmly raised his arms, declaring victory to the Mexica ranks. Cheers finally arose from the Tarasco ranks, accompanied by the excited shouting of the warriors.

"Yuku! Yuku! The Hound bestowed by the Three Gods, capturing the tigers and panthers of the Mexica people!"

Underneath the Wolf Banner, Xiulote's eyes widened as he recalled the movement of the Tarasco warrior's spear, but he was unable to remember it clearly. The young commander looked grave. He heard the enemy's shouting, bit his lip slightly, and waved the small flag again.

This time, a formidable Jaguar Warrior stepped out of the formation. Dressed in a vibrant tiger-skin armor and wearing a drooping Feather Crown, he roared fiercely at the enemy before him.

"Guardian of the War God! I, the warrior from Tenochtitlan, 'War Tiger' Ixca, challenge the 'Hound' Yuku of Tarasco!"

Seeing the attire of the Jaguar Warrior, Yuku's face became serious. He gripped his Spear tightly and bowed his head in respect. The intense war drums began again, and the fight for life and death continued!

Ixca used only the balls of his feet to touch the ground, maintaining a tiger-like agility in his movements. He moved quickly in short steps, wary of Yuku's swift and accurate Spear, keeping to the maximum extent of flexibility.

This time, "Hound" Yuku also began to move. His steps were precise, his sense of distance flawlessly accurate. After a few exchanges of testing blows, he would always dodge the enemy's attacks at just the right moment. Leveraging the length of the Copper Spear, he moved like a striking serpent, launching attacks repeatedly at Ixca's vulnerabilities.

"Bang, bang!" The Jaguar Warrior's shield was firm and solid. Ixca used the shield to block, deflected with side turns, not a single superfluous move, successfully defending against every attack. He came close to his adversary several times, swinging his War Club violently towards Yuku's vital points!

However, Yuku, agile as a hunting dog, moved lightly on his feet, avoiding attacks with utmost precision. Sometimes he would split his hands, use the thick shaft of the spear to deflect the War Club, and counter-attack swiftly! The two continued their duel like jumping tigers, each concise movement filled with endless lethality!

Xiulote stood on high ground, carefully watching the exciting combat, his eyes shining with appreciation.

This Tarasco warrior's use of the spear already bore the rudiments of the Spear Technique of the Celestial Empire. With the evolution of armor, Spear infantry would come to dominate the ranks of the armies in the Middle Ages. This spear technique, with some simplification and improvement, would be suitable for widespread introduction in the military.

Chapter 432 - Homage to the Master Part 4

A moment later, Ixca suddenly roared in anger. He forcefully threw his left shield, swiftly grabbed the spear thrust by his opponent with his left arm. Then, the Jaguar Warrior stepped forward, raising his war club with his right hand, ready to deliver a mortal blow to his disarmed enemy!

Just then, Yuku revealed a sinister smile on his indifferent face. He suddenly loosened his grip on the spear with both hands, swung a punch with his left hand, hitting the opponent's shoulder that held the

club, slowing down the swing. Almost simultaneously, his right hand swiftly drew the bronze axe from his waist, a short, sharp chop that directly cut into his opponent's neck!

"Hiss!" Blood spurted, splashing both their faces. Ixca's pupils dilated suddenly, and pain caused his entire body to convulse. A cold mercy flashed in Yuku's eyes. He delivered another fierce chop, and a fine head dropped to the ground as if it were real, a bright spray of blood dazzlingly burst forth, bringing eternal liberation!

The situation in the field changed instantly, Xiulote widened his eyes in surprise. He watched as Yuku stepped back, wiped the blood from his face, bowed to the King, and then raised his arms again. Tarasco warriors erupted in fervent cheers, while Mexica warriors remained silently solemn.

"What a peerless warrior!"

A moment later, Xiulote came to his senses, whispering in admiration. He had been watching the King of Tarasco and realized that this was a truly formidable warrior when he saw him step away from the King's side. The young Commander hastily ordered his weary favorite to be called back.

"How so?"

Xiulote looked calm, turning to Toltec. Black Wolf, who had been clamoring to continue the battle, was now silent, his eyes brightening with fighting spirit as he watched Yuku raising his arms in the field.

"How so?"

Xiulote turned to Bertade. The Head Warrior gripped his war club and replied in a deep voice.

"Not weaker than me, a battle worth fighting. If no bow and arrow is used, there's only a sixty percent chance."

Hearing this, Xiulote shook his head. He was somewhat stumped; if even the Head Warrior felt it was tough, sending others to fight would surely be fatal.

As the young Commander pondered, a Mexica Scout rushed from the north. Waving a flag that denoted urgency, he unimpededly made his way through the Personal Guard Warriors until he collapsed before the prince.

"Your Highness! More than ten miles north, Tarasco reinforcements have appeared! The enemy numbers over two thousand, all clad in warrior armor, bearing the Hummingbird flag from Qinchongcan City, the Capital!"

"What? Over two thousand, more than ten miles away?!"

Xiulote clenched his fists, demanding loudly.

"Are you sure it's reinforcement from Qinchongcan City? The City-State Legion responsible for guarding the Capital, has there been any communication by envoy?"

"The scout confirmed it's Qinchongcan's banner! No communication from the City-State Legion yet!"

"Damn! These blind moles, incapable of holding a responsibility, ruining my plans!"

The young Commander cursed under his breath, then immediately composed himself, solemnly commanding his generals.

"Toltec!"

"Present!"

"I give you two thousand longbow militia, five hundred elite scouts, to stop the northern enemy! Before I defeat Su'angua, do not allow any enemy troops to move south! Can you do it?!"

"Yes! I will serve Your Highness to the death, defeating the enemy before us!!"

Toltec was spirited. He knelt on one knee, raising his hand to pledge.

"Good!"

Then, Xiulote raised his right hand, looked around at his generals, and shouted again.

"All generals, heed my command! No need to wait, break through the Tarasco royal army, the decisive battle is now! Sound the big drum, blow the bamboo flute, wave the battle flags! Holy City Legion, Spear Legion, Divine Blessing Legion, Temple Guards, Longbow Personal Guards, Jaguar Warrior Brigade, all forces, attack!!!"

Chapter 433 - The King's War – Part 1

The gusty winds whipped fiercely, scattering the clouds above the sky. The sun blazed intensely, overlooking the fields of men below. In the vastness of heaven and earth, the grand legion marched onto the battlefield, becoming the cold chess pieces in the hands of the Commander; the fervent beating of the war drums, the fearless Samurai sang out with vigor, turning into a chapter of fervent bloodshed within the pages of epic history!

Amidst the war drums and shouts, Xiulote ascended the lofty command platform, authoritatively waving the command flag in his hand.

The vast Mexica legion sprang into action instantaneously, spreading like a deluge toward both flanks, then swiftly regrouping under different Commander's Flags. When two armies contend, each must exploit strengths and avoid weaknesses! Since the Northern Army had the advantage in numbers, it had to extend the battle line as much as possible, increase the width of frontal engagement, and envelop the enemy forces from both wings.

In just a moment, tens of thousands of Mexica Samurai, like a long serpent formation, coalesced into four formidable military arrays. The central army consisted of seven thousand long-spear Militia, divided into left and right formations. These battle-hardened spearmen were organized into units of two hundred and battalions of a thousand. The left formation was slightly thicker, led by the monkey Kuluka who commanded four battalions; the right formation was slightly less, with three battalions under the miner Ezpan. Under the sharp command of the Bone Whistle, the spearmen stood shoulder to shoulder,

stacking their spears into staggered layers. Then, under the guidance of their squad leaders, one spear formation after another, like metallic hedgehogs, moved forward slowly yet resolutely.

Xiulote watched the powerful central army becoming neatly organized like a hedgehog, and nodded slightly. In the battle of the Takuro Plains, the long-spear Militia had defeated the formidable Samurai formations head-on, killing thousands of elite Samurai. The mentality of the Militia had undergone a transformation, finally growing into a reliable central legion. True elite soldiers come from the fire of life and death! At this moment, looking from the command platform, the rhythm of the long-spear legion was methodical, their steps steady, already showing an air of elite soldiers.

With strong forces in hand, a grand sentiment naturally reverberated in his chest! The Young Commander looked all around, ordering the central army to thrust forward, with seven thousand long spears arrayed ahead; the wings to cover, with six thousand Samurai arrayed for a combined strike!

The left wing was the loyal Holy City Legion. Three thousand Holy City Samurai held shields and clubs, lowly growling like a pack of wolves under the leadership of the Jaguar Olosh. These hometown warriors, who had followed for generations and were always well-treated, were willing to fight to the death for their commander. The right wing was the devout Religious Legion, formed by the remaining Temple Guards and blessed warriors. The veteran Etalik blew the sharp Death Whistle, while Natali chanted the praises of the Chief Divine. The Religious Legion stood grim and solemn. Whether they were Mexica Samurai or Otomi Warriors, all clutched the Sun Amulet around their necks, praying wholeheartedly to the supreme Chief Divine. Faced with the Royal Army of the foreign god, they were filled with a sacred fervor for battle, and would show no mercy!

The rapidity of the war drums surged with a murderous intent. The four armies in the vanguard maintained a steady pace, advancing toward the likewise unfolded Tarasco Royal Army. Behind them were three thousand archer Legion. These long-range warriors, armed with Longbows and Powerful Crossbows, accompanied by quivers of Arrows, moved in tandem with the vanguard. A new batch of Arrows from the Lake Capital City had been fully replenished, and the warriors were free to shoot. As the two Legions drew near to each other, the Crossbowmen formed ranks in succession. They drew bows and cocked crossbows, ready to let loose a deadly rain of arrows at any moment.

Then, the first to strike like a thunderbolt, were not the awaiting Crossbowmen. "Boom! Boom!", two fierce thunderclaps suddenly exploded, as if the wrath of the God of Thunder had descended upon the land!

In the gaps of the central army, two ready-filled wooden cannons were swiftly fixed into position and immediately fired! At a distance of no more than a hundred paces, the scattered stone shards carried an unstoppable Force, striking the disciplined spear formation of Tarasco's central army with tremendous power.

Dozens of elite spearmen suddenly let out piercing, wretched screams. They were drenched in dense sprays of Blood from their wounds, rolling on the ground in agony. The fragmented canister shots flew in all directions, with scores of nearby Militia wounded by the stone shards, running in fear and clutching their heads. Within the rising dust, thousands of arrayed Militia looked around in bewilderment. They fell into an unknown terror, bowing down in fear, praying for forgiveness from the divinities ahead.

The roar of the beast terrorized mortals! Centering on the impact point of the cannonade, the ranks of three thousand Tarasco spearmen bubbled like boiling Water, causing chaotic ripples to spread. The actual casualties of the two cannon volleys were only a dozen or so men, but the fear spread by a hundredfold!

Under the inherited Eagle Banner, King Su'angua suddenly widened his eyes, gripping the Divine Staff tightly in his hand. He had already heard of the Mexica's new weapons through confidential letters from the chief advisor, and had also encountered exploding Clay Tribulus during the battle in the High Mountain Fortress.

But at this moment, no matter how steadfast his will, no matter how much he prepared his troops, when he first truly encountered such a deafening roar like the God of Thunder's wooden beasts on the open field, King Su'angua's heart was still profoundly shaken, and his Militia's morale was still wavering!

Though the flanks of the long-spear square were weak, the front was exceedingly strong. Su'angua placed three thousand long-spear Militia in the central army, with two and a half thousand Royal Warriors unfolded on each wing. The core of two thousand Copper-axe Guards, armed with Longbows, arrayed behind the central army. Facing the offensive of the Mexica legion, the elite Taracos Royal Army made their stand, erecting Copper Spears and presenting a solid defensive formation. However, under the bombardment of the wooden cannons, the sturdiest central defense seemed to crumble in an instant!

Su'angua gritted his teeth fiercely. This was a bad start, and an ominous premonition rose in his mind. He drew out a red flag that had been prepared in advance and pointed it to the left and right toward the direction of the wooden cannons. The piercing sound of the Bamboo Flute was blown immediately. Two thousand Copper-axe Guards simultaneously stepped forward, drawing large Longbows, and releasing a sky-full of deathly howls toward the enemy's vanguard!

Chapter 434 - The King's War Part 2

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!" Black arrows blotted out the sky, with metal tips glinting coldly. The Copper-axe Guards released their lavish copper arrows, which whistled as they plunged into the Mexica's center army. Even behind the protection of wooden shields, over a dozen gunners were killed instantly, while more than a hundred militia pierced through their paper armor, fell to the ground with blood-curdling screams.

The surviving gunners hastily dragged the wooden cannons towards the rear. They had completed their most important mission. The first-generation Teotl wooden cannons, loaded with stone grapeshot, had a range of just over one hundred steps—not even as far as the longbow—and took nearly a quarter hour to reload. With the initial surprise over and facing a prepared enemy, the next step was to reload the wooden cannons and look for another prime opportunity.

Longbow copper arrows, close-range shooting. The Mexica legion with long spears faced such fierce ranged attacks for the first time; their steady rhythm become chaotic, and their forward march hesitated slightly.

The central army's Commander-in-Chief, Kuluka, and Ezpan remained composed, each shaking their command flags, directing the spear formation squads in the camp. Seeing the signals on the flags, the Warrior Captain Guzman desperately blew his bone whistle around his neck, shouting loudly, re-coordinating the footsteps of his troops. Under the captain's orders, the front five ranks of spearmen raised rattan shields, covering the sky overhead. The remaining spearmen bowed their heads, hiding their faces beneath rattan helmets. They almost surrendered all vision and any superfluous emotions. At this moment, harsh military discipline fused into their bodies, long-term training became instinct. They were simply ruthless war machines, following the steps of their comrades, continuing their relentless charge forward!

Atop the command post, Xiulote abruptly lowered the command flag! The shooting flutes shattered the sky, and the three thousand-strong archery legion paused briefly, followed by a thunderous hum.

Thousands of feathered arrows crossed the sky, with a slanting arc, like lightning spreading, "thud, thud," they pierced into the enemy's central army. The Tarasco militia with long spears were amid chaos, defenseless against the pouring rain of arrows, and in an instant, over two hundred men were killed, their blood splashing as they tumbled down. The front-line Warrior Captain was struck by an arrow and died, further intensifying the militia's chaos!

Su'angua looked ahead, observing the beginning disarray in his own central army and the enemy spearmen who were quickly closing in, and he deeply furrowed his brow. He waved the red flag once more and then drew out the black flag symbolizing death, pointing it towards the central army up ahead.

The two thousand Copper-axe Guards once again released a fierce volley of arrows, slowing the Mexica central army's advance. Then the front row of two hundred Copper-axe Guards solemnly broke formation. They switched to great shields and copper axes, sprinting into the midst of the militia with long spears. As per daily training, one hundred guards raised their great shields, protecting the camp captains at various levels. They yelled and kicked at the panicked militia, regaining control of the spear formation. The other one hundred guards showed no mercy, seizing fleeing soldiers who broke through the ranks, pinning them to the ground, and with a swift axe stroke, heads rolled in an instant.

Following this, under the King's stern orders, the accompanying priests moved to the forefront. They danced wildly, chanting and singing, calling upon the divine power bestowed by the three gods to suppress the evil Mexica beast. Amidst the high-pitched chants of the priests, the front-line militia with long spears finally managed to regain some morale and tightly gripped their weapons to face the inevitable fate.

Relentless arrow volleys crossed once again, the pouring bodies spilling hot blood. Amidst the earth-shaking shouts, the Mexica legion's charge arrived in an instant! The Camp Captain Guzman urgently blew his bone whistle, and the two hundred-strong spear formation suddenly accelerated. Under the push of the entire squad, the foremost five ranks of spears shone with a chilling cold light, accelerating forwards in layers, then abruptly stopped, penetrating the equally cold five ranks of spears!

Xiulote's gaze sharpened slightly. For a moment, he seemed to hear a dull collision. In the Young Commander's eyes, the spear formations of both armies crashed violently, and a glaring red line burst forth at the front! The front rank of spear warriors on both sides fell like mowed down cornstalks, uniformly pierced by several spears, and toppled sideways one after another. Whether clad in War Clothes or paper armor, they were all so fragile in that moment of clash!

Many militia were impaled on spears yet did not die quickly. Their shrill screams overshadowed the battle drums, becoming the most vivid notes on the battlefield. The spear formation of the opposing sides turned ruthlessly, the rear ranks of spearmen thrust their spears repeatedly into the enemies before them, and the screams quickly faded. Soon, the second rank became the frontline, gripping their spears tightly, thrusting forwards. The following ranks held their spears high, stabbing diagonally downwards, while under the pressing force from behind, they desperately pushed forward.

From afar, the hedgehog-like formations pressed against each other, the forest of spears collided and waved. After losing their momentum, the contest between the spear formations came down to strength and discipline. The killing swiftly diminished, while the shoving gradually intensified. The Mexica spear formation, with a clear numerical advantage, gradually surrounded from both sides but could not break through for the moment. The warriors on both sides held on like tug-of-war, until one side could no longer withstand the pressure, and their formation scattered. That would signal one-sided slaughter!

The arrows rained down from above once more, this time descending on the loosely formed flanks; hundreds of warriors from both armies were struck in succession, falling dead one after another. The rain of arrows passed like a long wind, laying down warriors like Luwei reeds. But after the storm, the tough Luwei rose stoutly once again!

The Holy City's warriors on the left wing swung their shields, howling as they rushed into the Kingdom's Warrior lines. In that moment, copper spears collided with war clubs, wooden shields clashed with leather shields, roars and shouts fused together, drifting over the solemn wilderness!

Chapter 435 - The King's War Part 3

Olosh led the most elite hundred Jaguar warriors of the Holy City, personally as the spearhead, charging into the front line of the battle. He swung his war club with agility and strength, like a sprinting tiger or panther, suddenly breaking into a troop of copper spear warriors who had not had time to form their ranks. The formidable Jaguars powerfully chopped downward, felling the feathered helmet-wearing captain at the lead, even denting his copper helmet. Following that, he swept sideways in quick succession and took down three more men in an instant. The Jaguar warriors behind him pounced forward, and amidst their roaring growls, their war clubs struck in rapid succession, smashing dozens of enemy soldiers to the ground.

Olosh paused briefly. He gasped for air, looking around, and couldn't help but furrow his brows deeply. Although the Jaguar warriors serving as the spearhead were unparalleled in strength, the main force of warriors couldn't break through with them. The expressions of the Tarasco warriors before him were calm, and their formations were neat. They arranged themselves into regiments of eight hundred and companies of two hundred, each forming their spear formations, supplemented with war clubs and bronze axes. The company leaders wore copper feathered helmets and carried vibrant small banners on their backs, commanding the troops in an orderly fashion, firmly holding the main forces of the Holy City outside the spear formation. And when faced with the charge of the Jaguar warriors, the Tarasco people scattered without falling into disarray, one troop retreating to regroup while another would neatly advance. They were like fish in a lake, constantly interchanging and shifting, leaving no discernible end in sight.

"Dammit!" he punched out fiercely, but it was like hitting flowing sand. "Such a tough nut to crack, truly the most elite Royal Army of Tarasco!"

Olosh cursed under his breath. He stared at the enemy forces that began to encircle them from both sides, shooting them a fierce glare. Then, without any hesitation, the Jaguar led his elite squadron, turning around to kill their way back into the ranks of the Holy City's army. Since they couldn't break through quickly, they had to reorganize their forces, form shield walls, and engage the enemy with steady and forceful entanglement.

The Religious Legion on the right flank swung their war clubs, however, it was a different kind of desperate ferocity! Once the fanatical Religious Knights were committed to war, they were like moths to a flame, imbued with an insatiable will to fight to the death!

As soon as the warrior of the two armies met, they skipped the preliminary probing and maintaining distance, entering into brutal hand-to-hand combat. Facing the Tarasco spear formation squads, the zealous Otomi warriors threw their war clubs and, with shields only big enough to cover half their bodies, launched a mortal charge! These converted warriors shouted the name of the Chief Divine as they rushed toward the dense copper spears, suffering cruel deaths within the spear formations. They used their own flesh and bone to lock the enemy's weapons, just to break the tight spear walls!

And as soon as the spear formations hesitated, exposing a flaw, a large group of Religious Knights would rush forward, engaging in close-quarters combat with the Tarasco people. The Temple Guards blew a piercing whistle, the zeal of battle boiling over as they bellowed fiercely. They scarcely defended themselves, wielding extra-long Maquahuitl Longstaves in both hands, breaking through the enemy's copper spears, slicing through the enemy's leather armor, and then cutting into the enemy's flesh! As they charged at the enemy formation, they would quickly fall in battle or, along with one or several enemies, ascend to the Divine Kingdom in the heavens within moments!

Xiulote gazed down upon the grand scene of battle, his expression solemn and grave. The left flank and the center army still maintained clear divisions, holding shields in opposition; however, the warriors on the right flank were already entangled with each other, indistinguishable from one another. Sprays of blood bloomed on the right, only to be drowned by the noisy dust. The warriors from both sides melted away like early spring snow, with a sixth of them gone in less than a quarter of an hour!

The Young Commander took a deep breath, his eyes revealing an unfeeling determination. He waved the red banner once more, and five hundred stirrup crossbowmen advanced together, stopping just behind the front lines of the battle. A sharp whistle blew, and over a hundred paces away, the crossbowmen suddenly brought up their large crossbows. They took brief aim at the Tarasco Eagle Banner and the King beneath it, and with a look upward, they struck!

Chapter 436 - The King's War – Middle

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"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!" Slender shadows rose en masse, like the shadow of the God of Death, suddenly flying far off. The metallic Copper Arrows cut through the sky, carrying a deadly screech, converging towards the Tarasco's Royal Banner!

Watching the incoming swarm of black dots, Su'angua under the Royal Banner clenched the Divine Staff, his pupils sharply constricting. In this critical moment, all he managed was to lower his head and bow his body before the sharp Arrows met him!

"Pfft, pfft, ah, ugh!..."

Anguished cries of the dying continuously rang out beside the King, those he had always trusted, along with a dozen or so Imperial Guards by his side. The sharp Copper Arrows penetrated the Samurai's Leather Armor, deeply embedding into their chests and bellies, warm blood immediately spilling from the wounds. However, those same Copper Arrows that fell upon the King only produced a "thud, thud" upon impact.

The low sound of metal collision echoed within the Bronze Armor, the continuous impact force forcing the King to step back. Caught in the ambush of the Powerful Crossbow, Su'angua's head was reeling, his body staggeringly unstable. This wave of Copper Arrows came suddenly and fiercely. Like the rapid



patter of a sudden downpour, they came with the wind, disappeared in an instant, carrying with them a dozen lives, and deeply embedded in the mud surrounding the Royal Banner.

Su'angua bit his lower lip fiercely, shaking his head hard. He subconsciously released his hands, feeling around his head and body, only to touch a stretch of solid coldness. The young King then realized that he was still wearing an extraordinary set of Armor.

The surrounding Imperial Guards immediately converged. Dozens of Samurai raised their Great Shields, shielding the King at the first instance. The second wave of Fletched Arrows whistled through the air, deeply embedding into the thick Wooden Shields, producing a dull "thud thud". Su'angua, still shaken, had come this close to death for the first time in his past twenty or thirty years!

The young King gazed blankly, looking at his empty hands, and inquired instinctively.

"What is this?!"

Great General Yuku bent down, carefully picking up the fallen Divine Staff from the bushes, and respectfully presented it to the King. He then shielded the King with a Rattan Shield, squinting his eyes to observe the Crossbowmen in the distance before replying confidently to the King.

"Your Majesty, it's the Crossbowmen of Mexica ambushing us. They hold a type of horizontal Greatbow which has both a greater range and power than Longbows!"

Su'angua's eyes blazed with anger, sweeping a glance over his faithful followers collapsed on the ground. They had just reported the good news from the north, informing of the arrival of reinforcements before being shot dead in front of him. Beside their glaring corpses, the inherited Eagle

Banner still fluttered, but the soaring eagle had lost its wings. The Banner now bore a dozen holes from the Arrows, mercilessly piercing through Tarasco's eagle!

A pain struck the King's heart, and an ominous premonition once again surged. He kept a grim face, ignoring the sight of those dead guards, and spoke sternly.

"Yuku, my hound. Command of the Copper-Axe Guards is temporarily yours, strike those with the horizontal bows! The killing power of their Arrows is greater, we can't allow them to shoot at will!"

"Understood!"

Yuku bowed his head in acknowledgment, without unnecessary words. His face was as if carved from stone, he closed his left eye, extended his right arm, and swiftly gestured twice to estimate the distance of the Crossbowmen. Then he summoned the captains of various guard units, whispering instructions. The Copper-Axe Guards in Formation quickly dispersed, splitting into two groups of two hundred Archers each.

Arrows rained down, Fletched Arrows and Copper Arrows assailing once more. Two squads huddled by the King's side, raising their Great Shields in defense, while the other Imperial Guards briskly advanced beyond the central army.

Yuku, bending slightly, led two hundred of the finest archers himself to the edge of the frontline. Ignoring the nearby spears clashing and cries of battle, he calmly took out his Longbow, drew it fully, nocked an Arrow, and with a mere aim, the Arrow flew swiftly towards its target!

A Mexica Crossbowman who was bent over reloading suddenly felt a pain in his chest, seeing half of an arrow shaft protruding. The sharp Copper Arrow had pierced him from the front, bringing his weakening body crashing down onto the ground with a "thud". His Greatbow quietly scattered on the ground as blood gushed violently from his wound. The Crossbowman futilely pressed on the wound on his chest, looking at the increasingly dark sky, finally understanding that his destiny was to become one with the earth.

The hound Yuku showed no emotion, squinting fiercely, releasing Arrow after Arrow. The surrounding Divine Archers pulled together, and several Mexica Crossbowmen fell dead. Such sharp shooting soon drew attention. In a moment, Yuku's eyes narrowed, and he suddenly threw himself to the side. Dozens of Fletched Arrows descended with the whistle of death all around his previous position. Several Tarasco Divine Archers, with no chance of escape, were struck down!

As the rain of Arrows fell to the ground, Yuku rolled up from the ground, waving his hand, and the Archers spread out to both sides, continuing the exchange with the Mexica men. The piercing sound of a Bone Whistle echoed from under the Black Wolf's banner in the distance. When he again raised his Greatbow, the elite Crossbowmen had already retreated, distancing themselves from the Royal Banner.

Yuku shifted his aim and effortlessly shot a Militia carrying a Spear. The densely packed Spear Formation was advancing through gaps in the formation not far in front of him. Yuku's eyes turned cold, sweeping over like a wolf, soon focusing on a Spear Captain issuing commands.

At the forefront, the Spear Captain had the best view. They were only about a quarter distance apart, and with a half-bow shot by Yuku, the young Spear Captain was struck down. Temporarily halted, the Mexica Spear Formation lost its command. A deputy captain on another front immediately blew the Bone Whistle to take command. Yuku furrowed his brow and released another fierce Fletched Arrow. The sharp sound of the Bone Whistle was cut off halfway as it helplessly fell into the mud. With the deputy captain dead, a War Priest in the center of the small unit took command, blowing a new round with the Bone Whistle. The Priest's position was at the heavily guarded center, surrounded by raised Rattan Shields. Yuku's eyebrows tightened, aiming for a while, and before he could shoot, a whistling rain of Arrows poured from the sky!

Thousands of Mexica archers advanced to the front line and began firing rapidly and fiercely. The spear-wielding militia of Tarasco kept falling, even the Copper-Axe Guards holding shields were continually dying. The fierce offensive surged like waves, focusing on the most disadvantaged central path.

Yuku sighed, once again shooting down a militiaman in the front line casually. Then, he gestured for the guards to disperse and shook the yellow flag for free firing. Only then did the peerless warrior calm down, joining the Divine Archers by his side in mutually suppressing the Mexica archers, patiently trading shots.

The Tarasco guards were slightly outnumbered, but each was highly skilled in martial arts, wearing copper helmets and shoulder armor. They spared no expense in using armor-piercing copper arrows, shooting through the gaps between small formations and fighting an equal battle with the more numerous archery legion.

The front lines brandished copper spears and war clubs while the rear alternated between copper arrows and bone arrows. Death rolled in with the long wind, descending upon every corner of the battlefield! Close-range shooting was especially difficult to defend against and thus particularly brutal. However, after two rounds, each side had suffered over a hundred bowmen killed.

Xiulote silently observed the casualties from the shooting, and he nodded heavily and affirmatively. The battle groups participating in the shooting were composed of the Royal Family's Longbow Warriors and his own Longbow trusted aides. Although they were combat-savvy, they were slightly less elite than the Copper-Axe Guards. These formidable guards were efficient at both long and close range, and currently, using this method of attrition, the Mexica legion had the advantage!

The three armies killed each other, dying together back and forth. The vast battlefield boiled and overflowed with noise, and the fierce killing reached a climax!

In this king's war, the elite warriors and militia, like roasted pine nuts, crackled loudly and then cracked open and fell in batches; while the noble aristocracy and officials, like fragile tomatoes, fell under the blade and the rain of arrows, splattering blood in groups. Boiling waves of sound filled everyone's ears, and vibrant red colors emerged before everyone's eyes, until two thundering sounds of "thunderbolt" exploded again in the warriors' hearts!

"Boom, boom!" The long-silent two wooden cannons were finally loaded and moved to the fiercely contested left wing. Operated by craftsmen, the wooden cannons fired from the outskirts of the formation, shooting obliquely into the rear of the Royal Army warriors! A dozen Tarasco warriors toppled over, rolling on the ground in agony. The enemy on the left wing suddenly slowed, and their morale sharply decreased, causing the neatly operating squads to suddenly halt.

In the midst of the fierce battle, Olosh's eyes brightened. He seized this rare opportunity, once again leading hundreds of Holy City Jaguar warriors into the enemy's formation. A group of two hundred men were suddenly dispersed, and the squad replacing them was still in brief chaos. The Holy City warriors surged forward, turning two hundred Tarasco warriors into fallen bodies, thus gaining the upper hand in the battle!

Under the fierce charge of the Mexica legion, the remaining two thousand Tarasco warriors stepped back dozens of steps before grouping into several spear formations under the command of the Royal commander-in-chief, stubbornly blocking the advance of the Holy City warriors.

Hearing the thunder sound again, the hawk-eyed Yuku narrowed his eyes. He turned towards the noise coming from the bombarded right wing of the Royal Army, made a quick judgment, then gestured for the divine archers to follow him. After that, the agile hunter bowed his body, swiftly moving towards the right wing. In just over a dozen breaths, the mysterious Mexica wooden cannon appeared again before him. The peerless warrior suddenly stood firm, pulled back his greatbow, and released a fierce shot!

"Swoosh! Thud!" The arrow pierced into an eye socket, exiting through the back of the head. Behind the smoking wooden cannon, a canon-operating craftsman fell backward, dead on the spot. "Swoosh,

swoosh, swoosh!" A barrage of feathered arrows swiftly followed, killing over a dozen cannoneers. Only then did the supervising warriors turn their shields to protect the right side of the craftsmen.

Witnessing batch after batch dying before them, the cannon operators trembled all over, half-kneeling beside the wooden cannon. Most of them had been selected from craftsmen, entrusted with an important mission by His Highness, and had always enjoyed generous treatment. One young cannoneer couldn't bear the pressure of life and death anymore, suddenly stood up, and screamed as he ran to the rear.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!" Another volley of feathered arrows swiftly struck, piercing through the bodies of the fleeing soldiers. The young gunner knelt on the ground, and with one last glance at the overseeing longbow-armed trusted aide, he slumped over, devoid of all life.

On the King's battlefield, retreat meant death! The trusted aides looked indifferently at the dead bodies and, with solemn expressions, drew their longbows again. At that moment, they entrusted their fate to the Chief Divine and the divine archers opposite them, staking their only lives!

With the cover provided by the archers, the two wooden cannons were finally dragged away by the gunners from the perilous frontline. The tense reloading began again. The gunners clenched their teeth and silently prayed to the Chief Divine for a safe return next time!

Under the commander's flag of Black Wolf, Xiulote stood imposingly. He was like a Wolf King atop a mountain, controlling the vast battlefield beneath him!

The battle was extremely fierce, and every minute of the fight saw hundreds of elite samurai fall dead! The Mexica legion held the overall advantage, and the thunderous cannon fire continued for two rounds. But the Tarasco royal army, tough as resilient leather, still maintained a stable defensive position. Although the enemy's morale continued to wane, it stubbornly did not collapse. The King of

Tarasco stood firm behind the central army, with the battered banner held high. The royal eagle, though with broken wings, never once touched the ground!

The Young Commander hesitated briefly. This battle had been all-in from the start, and he had already committed the vast majority of his pieces. At this moment, he had only the five hundred warriors of the Jaguar Warrior Brigade from the Capital City left in his hand, ready to be deployed anywhere on the frontline for a potentially fatal strike!

Seeing the prince's hesitation, Bertade knew what was in his mind. With no one else around, he stepped forward and whispered his advice.

"Your Highness, this is the King's war, and the safety of the King is supreme! The enemy's Imperial Guards still possess the strength to charge... Let the samurai battle in the front, and die for the glory of the King!"

Xiulote slightly closed his eyes and nodded slowly. He gazed down at the blood-drenched earth below, where blood blossomed into flowers, flowers dyed into a red carpet, and the carpet concealed beneath corpses. In this splendid spring light, cold bodies were trampled into the soft soil, nourishing the wilderness with rich nutrients. The cries of battle shook the heavens, birds fled in the distance, and only the spring breeze remained, transforming into profound clouds.

"Such fertile land. This year's spring plowing will certainly yield a good harvest!"

The young king muttered softly to himself, an imperceptible transformation quietly occurring within him. Xiulote did not notice, simply casting his gaze towards the north. In the clear horizon, thousands of Tarasco samurai could be seen shouting and roaring, clashing with Toltec's forces. High above, the Hummingbird banner stood tall, facing the Eagle Banner of the south, yet seemingly separated by the greatest of distances!

And in this moment, under the banner of the Hummingbird, an elderly samurai clad in leather armor, wielding a copper spear, silently stared into the distance at the black Wolf Banner, which haunted his nightmares countless times.

#### Chapter 438 - The King's War - Part 2

The long wind blew, the battle flag soared high, and the vivid hummingbird flew on the flag. It symbolized the reinforcements from the capital city, dancing in the air. The air carried the scent of blood from afar, and the wind was filled with fierce shouts. The sky was vast, the earth churned, the battle raged fiercely, and the killing filled the fields!

The aged Samurai stood solemnly under the battle flag, gazing towards the fierce battle to the south.

At the horizon's end were clusters of fierce skirmishes, while pale yellow dust continuously rose from the tangled formations. At that moment, tens of thousands of Samurai fought desperately, their small figures appearing and disappearing in the dust. They seemed to vanish into an illusory world, a demon's mouth spewing smoke, leading to the Land of the Dead deep underground!

The old Samurai continued searching. Soon, the inherited Eagle Banner caught his eye. From his perspective, the Royal Banner stood between heaven and earth like the sacred cocoa tree, having inherited two hundred years of glory. It stood stubbornly and still, allowing the ants beneath it to fight, keeping alive all hope!

Seeing this, the old Samurai sighed, silent and wordless. A warm breeze brushed over his new leather armor, bringing rapid calls; the slanting sunlight shone on his gleaming copper helmet, casting a long shadow. Time etched lines of sorrow on his face, leaving only his sparkling eyes.



"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!" A piercing barrage of arrows came again from the south. Seeing the shifting figures not far ahead, the old Samurai shivered abruptly. He quickly raised his shield and crouched swiftly, as the consecutive impacts "thud, thud" arrived. The surrounding recruits were hit by arrows one after another, screaming tragically as they struggled futilely on the ground. The area under the fluttering flag immediately cleared, leaving only dozens of old soldiers tightly holding their shields.

"Roar, roar!" The Vanguard of the Tekos Militia roared furiously. They could no longer contain the anger in their hearts, unwilling to suffer attacks in vain. These mountain warriors took big strides forward, charging towards the scattered enemy squads. But the agile Longbow Hunters once more retreated, as hundreds of elite Scout Warriors formed up to meet them. The Samurai easily reaped their opponents' lives with their war clubs swinging.

The war drums sounded, and hundreds of warriors with the Hummingbird insignia on their shields made their strike. The Mexica scouts immediately fell back, maintaining a stay-near-yet-far distance in scattered skirmishes. The Longbow Hunters quickly moved to the flanks, swiftly launching their hidden arrow attacks. More warriors of the capital city fell to the arrows. Among the Vanguard, over two hundred Tarasco Longbowmen also countered simultaneously. They shot down approaching enemies, pushing back the Mexica archers. The thousands of warriors from both sides thus tangled with each other, advancing and retreating, pausing and moving towards the south.

Only then did the old Militia Chiwaco peek from behind his shield. He carefully surveyed the front, and seeing the threatening figures now pushed back, he cautiously stood. The group of old soldiers holding shields continued to move south, escorting the battle flag.

The army formation advanced, leaving the recent battlefield behind. Chiwaco glanced at the severely wounded soldiers screaming on the ground, shaking his head helplessly. Then, he touched the sturdy copper helmet on his head and rubbed the solid leather armor on his body, sighing with relief.

Three days ago, the Chief Minister of the Capital City organized an army to support the king; the Samurai squad to which the old Militia belonged was also conscripted. Under the strict military orders, he could only pick up his weapons, accompanied by his brothers in arms, to depart once again from the grand

Capital City and join such a dangerous reinforcement force. Fortunately, before leaving, the Great Master of the Chief Minister was unusually generous for once, distributing brand-new Samurai equipment to every warrior. The craftsmen of the Capital worked day and night; the Capital's weapons and armor were plentiful, only the battle-ready Samurai were lacking.

"Boom, boom!" Distant cannon sounds came, like the roar of the God of Thunder. Hearing this familiar explosive sound, the old Militia shivered again. He looked towards the southeast, several miles away, where the king's banner gradually became visible. The vast Mexica legion appeared like dense dark clouds, and the elite Tarasco Royal Army was like a faint crescent moon. Black clouds covering the moon, the Royal Army was being severely suppressed, clearly at a disadvantage.

"Toot, toot!" Urgent trumpeting sounded. The Commander-in-Chief of the Hummingbird Family personally led the Vanguard, standing at the front line of combat. He waved the battle flag vigorously, and the warriors of the center army immediately followed up, joining the prepared strike formation.

Chiwaco blinked, continuing to hold his shield, guarding the fluttering flag. Beside him, a dozen shield-bearing warriors hesitated slightly before stepping forward. Chiwaco, quick and alert, "whooshed" his hand out, tightly grabbing a young Samurai. He suppressed the anger in his heart and cautiously scolded in a low voice.

"Foolish log, what are you doing! The masters are upfront as firewood, burning noisily, bright and clear. We should just watch from behind... what excitement are you trying to join?!"

The young Samurai, also clad in new armor and holding a sharp long spear, had a crooked headband tied outside his helmet, he was the former Militia Weizti. Tying a headband had been his habit for decades of village life. Although he now began to regard himself as a Samurai, it was hard for him to change overnight.

"Uncle, I'm now a respected Samurai master too!"

Weizti lifted his head, puffing out his chest, with a stubborn face.

"The King's banner is right ahead! That is the descendant of the gods, our last hope as Prepetcha people! I am now a Samurai master, and as long as I break through the Mexica line and rescue the king, I can be promoted to a great noble! And once a great noble, no one will have to suffer again! Perhaps, I can even find my wife and children..."

Chapter 439 - The King's War - Part 3

"Fart! What kind of master are you? You've been a suffering peasant all your life!"

Chiwaco's anger surged, and he violently reached out, slapping Weizti with a "smack". Then, the old militiaman quickly pulled the dazed Weizti to his side, lifted his arm to raise the shield, pretending to guard the flag.

"Stupid, stupid! You blockhead, how can you be so stupid? The nobility make empty promises, and you let yourself be fooled? Haven't you taken a good look at what time it is now? Nobility, the nobility of the kingdom are useless!"

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!" The sound of the arrow rain came again. Chiwaco didn't bother to look up and hurriedly raised his shield, hunching over to block in front of Weizti. The anticipated impact didn't come. The old militiaman cautiously peeked out, and this time the concentrated volley was aimed at the vanguard.

Bone arrows carrying the howl of the God of Death pierced through the samurais' leather armor. Several samurais died on the spot, and a dozen more were gravely wounded by stray arrows, writhing and

rolling on the ground. As if to confirm the old militiaman's words from earlier, one wounded warrior loudly cried out his military nobility status. The commander-in-chief of the vanguard glanced at the wounds and then coldly waved his hand. With the urgency of military matters, two warriors directly grabbed the military nobility, taking him to the rear of the legion. Those of the Great Nobility with private armies looked on coldly, remaining silent.

Weizti watched as the injured minor nobility was carried past him, hastily bandaged, and then left in the cold bushes. The fast-marching legion left behind no escort, leaving him to fend for himself. The tall bushes, like green graves, gradually swallowed the fading cries for help. At this place and time, once wounded, the outcome was sealed! Thinking of this, a chill rose sharply in Weizti's heart, and his face became expressionless.

Chiwaco sighed. He looked at the blank expression on Weizti's face, his tone softened.

"Blockhead, your wife was conscripted. What becomes of women conscripted from the villages? You've seen it clearly these days. And in this cannibalistic world, what can become of your six- or seven-year-old child? They're already dead! Now, you only have me and Luwei."

Having said this, the old militiaman pulled the blockhead to his side. Shoulder to shoulder, each holding a shield, they covered each other's flanks. The old militiaman spoke in a low voice audible only to them, word by word.

"Blockhead, your wife and son are dead; my wife and son are dead too. You need to understand, who really killed them! The Mexica didn't take your conscripted wife, they didn't destroy our village. They died like peas in a pod; count one for the Mexica, one for the conscripting warriors, and the remaining two should be on that damned chief and this wretched king!"

A fleeting ferocity flashed across Chiwaco's face. The successive great battles and upheavals finally honed a cold light in him. He took a deep breath and reached into his chest to search, wanting to sniff the sachet of herbs sewn by his wife one more time, but no matter how, he couldn't find it.

The old militiaman paused, then suddenly remembered, he had left the small cloth pouch with Luwei. It was the only legacy her mother had left, something that could give little Luwei a sense of security. And he himself no longer needed the herbs, to stay calm in warfare.

Chiwaco sighed once more.

"Stupid blockhead, stick with me. We still have to survive. Don't think about saving the king, save yourself first!"

Weizti nodded, then lowered his head, no longer speaking, like a frostbitten pumpkin. The two remained silent, guarding the banner of the Hummingbird, following the legion as it continued southward. The closer they got to the frontline of battle, the closer to the king's banner, the more vicious the Mexica's attacks became, and the fighting between the two armies grew even more brutal.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!" The arrow rain continued without pause. Mexica militiamen began to disregard casualties, closing in on the army formations, and desperately exchanged shots with the vanguard archers. The enemy's hundreds of warriors stopped retreating as well, and under the command of a young officer, they fought desperately against the charging Tarasco warriors. That young commander was exceptionally brave! Chiwaco couldn't help but shudder again as he watched the enemy cut down the noble warriors one after another with ease.

"Drip drip!" The shrill sound of the conch horn blew, and the attacking warriors were once again beaten back. The Mexica warriors didn't pursue, just stood in place gasping heavily, conserving their precious strength. Warrior Captain Puap retreated to the central army before wiping the thick blood off his face

and the fine beads of sweat from his neck with his war clothes. He looked back apprehensively at the Mexica warriors in formation, and with fear at the young enemy commander-in-chief, then spat out a sound of contempt.

"Damn, what a bunch of ruthless fellows! The Sun God dozes off, and the eagle is enshrouded by dark clouds. I can almost see the king, yet the legion can't break through for the life of them!"

The commander, Puap, spit viciously again before heading towards the central army's battle flag, where he loudly reprimanded his subordinates.

"A bunch of blind moles! Why do we need so many of you to guard the flag? Greenhorns who haven't faced battle are useless, and those disorderly savages just run amok—it's only you veterans I can rely on. On the next charge, you're all following me! The Chief said: Rescue the king, and every samurai will be promoted to nobility, and I will ascend to hereditary status!"

The old militiaman nodded and bowed, his aged face blossoming with a smile. He trotted up a couple of steps, took out a handkerchief, and respectfully wiped the blood and sweat from Puap's face while whispering softly.

"Great Master, may I have a word with you in private?"

Puap paused for a moment, giving the old militiaman a skeptical look, but still followed him under the battle flag. Around them were a few of the militiaman's brothers, all holding shields and spears, standing guard solidly.

"What's the matter, old man? Making it all mysterious and shady; it's really not straightforward!"

The old militiaman bowed respectfully but spoke with grave sincerity.

"Great Master, we have three thousand men, and even if half are greenhorns and savages, that still leaves us with fifteen hundred elite warriors! The enemy has but a few hundred at their core. If we truly fight to the death, where could they stand a chance? The current state of things has drained the blood of our House of Hummingbird warriors. The problem isn't with us! Look at the nobility in the central army, and then at the priests in the rear guard, has any one of them truly given their all?"

Puap was stunned. The warriors sent to support the engagement were divided into three groups: the Chief's Hummingbird warriors, the nobility's private armies from the city, and the priests' temple guards, each approximately one third. He surveyed the entire army, observing closely; Hummingbird warriors were charging at the front, the private armies of the nobility wavered in the middle, and the temple troops followed at the very back. In every engagement, it was the Hummingbird warriors who died first. And as soon as they faced the slightest setback, the nobility's private armies would retreat en masse, and the temple troops would halt as well.

"Damn it! These cowardly fish-rats! I'm going to complain to the vanguard commander-in-chief! The king is right there, and these shameless nobles and useless priests are still holding back their strength!"

Puap was furious, ready to return to the vanguard immediately. The old militiaman tugged hard on Puap's arm, urging him once more with deep conviction.

"Great Master, those are the great nobility and high priests! The commander-in-chief of the vanguard is so clever; he surely has seen through the rottenness of these scoundrels, but there's just no helping it! With the situation as it is, our few dozen men going up there will just be adding drops to a bucket—what good will it do? It's nothing but a wasteful sacrifice of several dozens of lives!"

Hearing the old militiaman's words, Puap's expression shifted. If he truly went out to speak up, either it would be futile, a waste of words; or the commander-in-chief of the vanguard might use it as an excuse to force the great nobility and high priests into a battle to the death. No matter the outcome of that battle, having offended these great nobles and high priests, what good end could there be for him, a mere newly ascended noble?

Watching the changing expressions on Puap's face, Chiwaco weighed his words, then added one final push.

"Great Master, you've always valued my loyalty, and I speak to you from the heart. In these times, you are nobility because you have warriors. Once the warriors are gone, you'll just be a samurai again! Great Master, I'll risk saying more. Even the great nobles of the kingdom are harboring their intentions, branches splitting from the old tree, pears ripening beyond the wall. Given your talents, even under Mexica rule, you could still live well—perhaps even better. This battle is the king's war, not ours!"

On hearing this, Puap's face darkened, the militiaman's words piercing his heart like arrows. The Warrior Captain stood in place, staring intently at the not-so-distant Eagle Banner and the Royal Army fighting beneath it. After a long while, as the Mexica's thunderbolts boomed again, he slowly nodded.

Chapter 440 - The King's War Continued Part 1

"Boom, boom!"

Xiulote solemnly waved the battle flag. The gunners ignited the match cord, and the two arrow-filled wooden cannons once again roared like thunderbolts! The blasting grapeshot pierced through the gaps between the center and the two wings, pounding into the rear of the Tarasco spear legions. Several Copper-axe Guards overseeing the fight instantly fell to the ground, blood spurting from their bodies as they rolled in the rear ranks. The hard-pressed Royal Army's spear formation once again began to waver!



"Toot toot!" The monkey Kuluka hurriedly blew the bone whistle and waved the small flag in his hand, throwing in the reserve troops.

Over five hundred Mexica spearmen formed a tight column, their feet pounding to the inspiring beat of the drums, moving from the rear to the front left, until they reached the outskirts of the front lines. Then, on the captain's command, the waiting spearmen all shouted in unison, lowered their rattan helmets, gripped their sharp copper spears, and charged fiercely towards the front!

Hundreds of Tarasco militiamen stood their ground for just a dozen breaths before being scattered by the surging tide of spearmen. Next, countless copper spears glistened coldly as they stabbed from various angles, piercing the obstructing bodies like lotus roots! The column of spearmen continued their assault and finally broke through the Tarasco defense line on the left side of the center for the first time!

Xiulote on the small hill showed a smile. He waved the small flag, and five hundred stirrup crossbowmen shot out a dense hail of arrows, covering the wooden cannons as they withdrew back to the center. The reserve gunners immediately rushed forward, filling the gaps left by the fallen, and began a new round of tense reloading.

The Young Commander surveyed the battlefield and took in the situation at a glance.

The Mexica center army was large in numbers, stretching from the center of the engagement to both sides, and starting to break through from the left. The struggle on the left wing became increasingly fierce, with the battle lines of both sides clashing like tightly bound waves. The Holy City Legion launched an advance in the middle, gaining a clear advantage. The Tarasco Royal Army gathered into a contingent, still forming up and resisting stubbornly. And on the right wing, the consumption of warriors was extraordinarily brutal, with both sides having lost nearly a third! Thousands of corpses piled up at the front, thick blood making the ground slippery underfoot, and the strength of the warriors began to wane, their battle formations gradually tightening. With a shrill blast of the conch, the Religious Legion

raised their shields, formed a shield formation, and their offensive momentum was momentarily checked.

At this moment, the left, center, and right armies pierced deeply into the Tarasco formation like arrows shot forth. Before completely defeating the enemies before them, they would temporarily disappear from the commandable order of battle. The three thousand archers had already spread out, freely shooting their deadly arrows. Only five hundred Temple crossbowmen still followed commands.

At this stage of the battle, the commander-in-chief's directives had become less important. The vast battlefield was once again left to the frontline warriors, with the final victory dependent on valiant combat, tenacious fighting spirit, and the determination of the lower-level officers!

Behind the fierce battlefront, the Eagle Banner still flew high. Su'angua's face was as grave as water, his heart chilled like autumn. He raised his sleeve, no longer caring for kingly decorum, and wiped the Huitu covering his face with force.

Just now, the two "thunderbolts" launched by the Mexica had exploded not far in front of the Royal Banner, the thunderous blast causing his ears to ache. The young king gripped the Divine Staff, watching grapeshot fly before his eyes, several supervising Imperial Guards injured and falling, and the spreading dust immediately coating his head and face. What caused him more anxiety was that under the threat of the "thunderbolts," the center army's spear formation was increasingly unstable, and the Mexica legion had already started to break through from the right!

The battle situation was unfavorable, the circumstances dire, and the long-awaited reinforcements had yet to arrive. Su'angua stood on tiptoe, looking toward the smoke-billowing northwest. The Hummingbird banners appeared on the horizon, the clusters of black dots not far apart, like the hope of a turning point, close enough to touch.

However, at this very moment, this long-anticipated reinforcement force stood still, not advancing. They recklessly entangled with another, clearly smaller cluster of black dots. The shouts from the northwest carried on the wind, the familiar accent calling out the king's name, the sound of fighting so clear, loud but not intense.

...

Su'angua took a deep breath, clenched his teeth, and gripped the hard Divine Staff tightly with his right hand. The King shifted his gaze, stared at the frontline briefly, then resolutely waved his staff, pointing towards the front right.

"Copper-axe Guards, full assault! Crush the Mexica spear infantry that has broken through!"

The trusted aide beside him exchanged glances. The Chief of the Personal Guards bowed his head slightly, asking cautiously.

"Your Majesty, your safety..."

"Order, full assault!"

"Understood, following your will!"

The Chief of the Personal Guards knelt on one knee and gave a respectful salute. He then attached the Commander's Flag to his back, blew the Bone Whistle, and summoned the two teams of Imperial Guards protecting the King. Afterwards, the brave Chief of the Personal Guards, waving his Longbow, personally ran at the forefront, with over a hundred supervising Imperial Guards joining as well.

In just a moment, nearly five hundred Copper-axe Guards became an imposing torrent, forming neat ranks, and charged into the frontline within fifty paces. The Chief of the Personal Guards suddenly stopped, drew his Longbow, and fired a whistling Copper Arrow at the Mexica's advancing Spear Formation!

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!" Hundreds of Feathered Arrows were fiercely shot, bringing an unstoppable howl! The close-range flat trajectory was so powerful that the captain in front of the spear formation only had time to cry out "Raise shields," before an arrow struck his head and face with a "sizzle," causing him to fall backward onto the bodies of his comrades in the rear. The rain of arrows pierced through the Paper Armor, leaving the spear infantry formation in a chaotic tumble. Before the acting vice-captain could issue orders, hundreds of fierce enemy soldiers, wielding Bronze Axes, charged furiously!

The Copper-axe Guards formed a tight array, and even during the charge, they stayed perfectly ordered. These battle-hardened Samurai had sharp eyes and agile steps, and they broke through directly at the weakest gap created by the fallen, following the archers' hit. In close combat, they swung their Battle Axes with great force, chopping down the enemy Spears, breaking through the Militia's Paper Armor, and swiftly cutting their opponents' throats. And when faced with the enemy's stabs, they always managed to dodge in time, raising their shields to block, or even slightly bending down to use their metallic shoulder armor to resist the speartips, then swinging their axes to cut off their opponent's legs!

The Chief of the Personal Guards's eyes gleamed sharply as he continuously waved his small banner. Even more Copper-axe Guards, like agile cheetahs, hastened their run and maneuvered to the sides and rear of the stalled long Spear ranks.

The assaulted vertical formation, lacking flank protection, quickly became disorganized. A large number of Mexica Militia were ferociously cut down, unable to form a collective Spear Formation, reduced to

fighting individually. And once the Spear Formation broke, how could the Militia stand against the mighty Imperial Infantry?

In just a handful of breaths, the two advancing units of Mexica spear infantry were routed, causing the surrounding formations to retreat as well. After that, the Tarasco spear infantry barely managed to fill the gaps, erected their Long Spears again, and the Mexica's assault was temporarily repelled.

Seeing the central line stabilize once more, Su'angua nodded expressionlessly.

"The Copper-axe Guards are after all infantry specialized in close combat, able to match up with the Eagle Warrior Battalion of the Mexica!"

The young King paused in deep thought, suddenly realizing his own mistake. He turned his head and loudly ordered the few remaining personal guards by his side.

"Take up my Commander's Flag and hasten to the front lines! Gather the scattered shooting guards and call back my brave hounds!"

The personal guards immediately saluted and left, leaving the King's side empty. The Chief of the Personal Guards, who was at the front line, fired another volley of arrows, stabilizing the situation at the front before hurrying back with five hundred Imperial Guards. His duty was to protect the most important King.

"Boom, boom!" A quarter of time vanished in an instant, and horrible thunderclaps came forth! This time they were closer to the Royal Banner. Tiny stones struck against the King's Copper Helmet,

producing a snapping sound. Grey, dust-filled mud splattered on the golden Copper Armor, leaving behind deep black spots.

"Pthoo, pthoo!" Su'angua spat the dust from his mouth, vigorously waved his hand, and stopped the guards from raising their shields around him.

"Stand back, give me a clear line of sight! Damn it, what are the reinforcements from the north doing? They still haven't broken through!"

Su'angua roared in anger, like the growling of a lion or tiger. His eyes widened as he gazed toward the northwestern sky. The Samurai of the reinforcements were still entangled with the Mexica militia, with the emblem of the House of Hummingbird barely visible on their Leather Armor. However, at this crucial moment, the Hummingbird was as slow as a fly, no longer soaring like Lightning!

"Your Majesty, the central army on the front line is about to collapse, and the reinforcements are nowhere near breaking through. We won't hold out that long! While the Samurai on both flanks are still holding on, and the Copper-axe Guards still have some strength left, let's do what it wants!"

Upon hearing this, flames of furious rage blazed in Su'angua's eyes. He turned around fiercely like an enraged tiger, only to see it was his loyal hound, Yuku. Yuku was drenched in blood, holding a Longbow, with several Feathered Arrows stuck diagonally in his thickened Leather Armor. Behind him, a large group of Copper-axe Guards had already gathered, forming an indestructible Battle Axe. At this sight, the young King's expression slightly eased, and he asked in a solemn tone.

"Yuku, is there truly no turning point in the battle?"

The Great General Yuku did not speak. He simply knelt down and deeply bowed his head to the King.

"Wait a bit longer... perhaps there is still hope..."

Su'angua's expression shifted, anxious, angry, resentful, hopeful, finally turning into a low murmur to himself.

However, the situation on the battlefield is never altered by an individual's will, and the King's waiting was in vain. Moments later, a Scout rushed over from the south. As soon as he neared, he collapsed before the King, having exhausted all his strength.

"Your... Your Majesty, the Mexica legion is only ten... just over ten miles to the south!"

"What did you say? The Mexica legion from the south? Just over ten miles away! Weren't they still forty miles away this morning?"

The young King stepped forward, grabbed the Scout's collar, and lifted him from the ground, demanding sharply.

"Did you witness it with your own eyes?!"

"Your... Your Majesty, by the three gods, I witnessed it with my own eyes!" The Scout gasped for breath before recounting in detail under the King's anxious gaze.

"Since this morning, the Mexica Scouts have been continuously skirmishing with ours. Then, the Mexica Commander-in-Chief under the Moon Banner suddenly accelerated their march. They abandoned the main force and all their supplies, taking only fifteen hundred elite soldiers, rushing north non-stop! Our small groups of Scouts couldn't hold them off for long, in just a quarter-hour, the enemy will reach the battlefield!"

Hearing the Scout's report, Yuku bowed deeply and advised the King loudly.

"Your Majesty, let's find another way! Let me protect you on our way to the southwest! The mountainous region to the southwest remains intact, there's still something that can be done for the Kingdom!"

The look of hope on Su'angua's face finally turned into utter despair. He looked at the distant Wolf Banner, and the young King facing him also looked over. That small figure, like a Divine Mountain from the East, weighed heavily upon his heart with the force of ten thousand jins.

After a moment, Su'angua bit his lip so hard it bled, and made up his mind. He looked around at the more than a thousand Copper-axe Guards, his last force and the hope for a desperate fight!

"Yuku, assemble the Copper-axe Guards, and take the inherited Royal Banner!"

The young King's mouth was bloodied, like a beast ready to tear into flesh, his eyes showing deep madness.



"I will lead the troops in person, circle around the left wing, and launch a final assault towards the opposite Commander's Flag!"