

Civilization 471

Chapter 471 - Siege Broken Part_2

"...Bullshit! I'm as valiant as ever... But, Youpil, our families have been old friends for generations, and we've known each other since we were kids. To say something I shouldn't, sometimes I truly feel... the kingdom is probably..."

Puap let out a deep sigh. He looked up into his old friend's eyes, gauging the changes in his expression.

"When two nations go to war, even the mountains crumble. Youpil, we're just ordinary samurai, what can we do?" Hearing this, Youpil didn't speak. He filled his bowl with liquor to the brim, drank it in one gulp, then wiped the residue from his mouth before heaving a long sigh.

"What can we do?... Since we are samurai, brilliant as flowers, there will always come a time when the flowers wilt! Today we drink in agony, gripping the weapons in our hands; tomorrow we bleed upon the earth, falling with a smile into the Netherworld. Puap, our ancestors died in battle for the head of our clan, so let's die for our leader as well! Come, let's drink a few more bowls!"

Upon hearing this, Puap lowered his head to conceal the changing expressions on his face. The smiles of his ancestors reappeared in his mind... He shook his head fiercely, trying to forget the dead, and poured another bowl of liquor, drinking it with a gulp.

On the other side, Necali was also visibly moved by Youpil's words. He observed the Patrol Captain's expression and slowly tightened his grip on the bronze axe.

Outside the great house, a few rookies stared inside, swallowing hard with envy. The city was in need of samurai, most of them having been conscripted from the militia. The sole Tarasco samurai shook his head, pursed his lips, and forced himself to look away, turning his gaze toward the streets in the distance. A moment later, a hint of confusion crossed the samurai's face.

"Sounds like... there's some noise?"

The Tarasco samurai took a step forward, following the barely perceptible sound of the wind, looking toward the southern city gate. Tonight was pitch-black, with no lights at the city gate. Squinting through the faint moonlight, he seemed to see some swaying shadows.

"Eh, what's that?"

The Tarasco samurai's eyes widened, and without hesitation, he turned and headed inside.

"Captain!... The city gate... uh, ah!"

The tip of a long spear suddenly pierced through the Tarasco samurai's abdomen, eliciting a piercing scream as he collapsed limply to the right. Behind him, an old militiaman looked on with cold indifference, stirring his hands forcefully. The spear was pulled out with a "pfft" from the warrior's body, and blood sprayed instantly!

"Attack!"

Necali leaped up from the ground, his battle axe severing the nearest patrol member's neck as he commanded in a low voice.

"Not one should survive!"

More than twenty Mexica warriors inside the house drew their axes at once. The clay bowls fell to the ground, shattering with a clear sound; the fruit liquor spilled out, spreading a captivating aroma. Then with the cleaving of the bronze axes, one by one, the figures struggled and fell to the ground, too late to blow the bone whistle, leaving only their blood to flow freely.

"You... you... Puap!"

Youpil's eyes were bloodshot. His right hand desperately brandished the short dagger he carried, and he bellowed in anger.

"Puap! What are you doing!"

Looking ashamed, the Huitu warrior drew the war club from his waist, holding it in front of him but hesitating to strike.

"Youpil, my brother... The king is dead, the nation has fallen, the Mexica have entered the city!... Join the great Alliance with me! I guarantee the safety of your family..."

"Mexico?! Go to hell!"

Youpil, like a frenzied tiger, lunged forward, stabbing with the dagger in his hand.

"This is how you repay the Chief! Generations of loyalty from your family! And you bring the Mexico into the city!!"

"Youpil, listen to me! If we surrender, we can preserve the Chief's..."

"Uh... Ah!..."

Youpil attacked with abandon, while Puap struggled to justify himself. At that moment, a sharp bronze axe, showing no mercy, struck from behind, cleaving precisely into Youpil's neck.

"Zzzap!" Warm blood splashed all over Puap's face and head. He stood there dumbly, reaching out to touch. But his old friend slumped sideways, crashing into a vat of liquor. In an instant, the clear liquid turned red, and the aroma of the fruit wine grew even stronger.

"Youpil..."

Necali lowered the bronze axe in his right hand, red blood slowly dripping from the blade. He gave Puap a cold glance and continued to brandish his battle axe to pursue and kill.

This was a one-sided slaughter. In less than a quarter hour, all patrol members were hacked to death without anyone sounding an alarm whistle. The old militiaman, with a few brothers, dragged the bodies outside the door into the house, piling them in a corner of the room. Then he approached the wine vat, about to drag Nepal's body out, when Puap pushed him away with a shove.

"Hmm!?"

Necali put down the blood-red cotton cloth and gripped the freshly polished bronze axe, his eyes filled with killing intent as he looked at Puap.

"It's all right, it's all right... He was a fool, but he won't cause any trouble. "

The old militiaman quickly waved his hand with a smile. Then, he moved closer to Puap and whispered in persuasion.

"My lord, the man is already dead. This is the path he chose, and there's nothing to regret... We have our own path to follow... If you really feel bad, you can take good care of his family... The Mexica captain kills without batting an eye, after doing so much, please don't fall here... "

Puap jerked his whole body and then managed a strained smile. He turned and leaned against the corner of the wall, bowing his head in silence. Necali loosened his right hand and continued patiently waiting.

Time flowed like wine, staining the ground red and painting the aroma of wine in the heart. Two to three quarters of an hour quickly passed, and there were no further incidents. Dozens of Mexica samurai worked frantically, finally digging through the blocked South Gate. The heavy creaking echoed in the night sky, accompanied by the suppressed cheers from inside and outside the city. The South Gate of Qinchongcan City was finally opened at this moment!

The city gate was wide open, without any defenses. At this moment, the sturdy Qinchongcan City was like a turtle's egg with its shell cracked open, revealing the delicious egg white, with no obstacles whatsoever! Hundreds of Mexica warriors gathered outside the city swarmed in at once. Dozens of Mexica scouts climbed up to the city gate, lighting bright torches, while waving signals toward the camp in the south.

Outside the camp, Xiulote had been sitting cross-legged for a long time. Seeing the signal at the city gate, he finally stood up, excitedly waving his scepter.

"With the capture of the South Gate, Qinchongcan has fallen! All commanders heed my command!"

The young Marshal's chest swelled with fervor. He looked around at the waiting commanders, observing the silent samurai numbering in the thousands, and ordered loudly.

"Black Wolf Torc!"

"Present!"

"Lead a thousand vanguards, strike directly at the Royal Palace, and seize the Tarasco chief! Do not give Qinchongcan City any chance to organize a defense!"

"Understood! Watch the might of Torc!"

Black Wolf excitedly slapped his chest. He ran at the forefront, the first to lead his troops away.

"Olosh, teacher!"

"Here, Your Highness."

"You have five thousand warriors, attack the Tekos camp in the city at once! I give you the authority to decide on your own, kill or negotiate surrender, just do not let these barbarians create havoc in the city!"

"I will follow Your command!"

The ferocious Jaguar warrior bowed his head in respect. He led five battalions of a thousand men each and disappeared into the night.

"Marshal Iskali!"

"Your Highness."

"Please lead six thousand of the southern army to raid the militia quarters of the other three gates, completely sealing off the Capital City!"

"Leave it to me, Your Highness!"

Iskali nodded in acknowledgment. Six thousand warriors surged north, shielding and wielding clubs.

"General Etalik! You have two thousand warriors, take control of the city's treasury!"

"Monkey Kuluka! Five thousand militia, block the roads within the city, prevent the enemy from gathering, and take control of the city's order!"

"General Natali! With two thousand warriors, eliminate the nobility within the city!"

"The end of the Western Expedition, is at this very moment!"

Chapter 472 - The Crimson Road

"Qinchongcan City... this great capital, stood unyielded for generations, but now..."

Puap stood dumbly by the city gate, like a statue devoid of expression, his heart filled with confusion.

He watched as massive ranks of Mexica samurai, in neat formations, streamed through the gaping city gate. The dark green figures layered upon one another, boiling with audacious killing intent, like an unstoppable deluge. In the deep darkness of the night, thousands of "deluges" held up glaring torches, as if to burn everything in sight to ashes!

The bright light of the torches was striking, painting the southern sky red. The piercing sound of the bone whistle blew suddenly in the city, and nearby militia camps started to stir noisily.

The Mexica samurai surged forward, quickly encountering spontaneous resistance from the militia. But under the swing of the war clubs, that resistance was so frail, soon overwhelmed by the merciless tide. Terrifying screams broke out continuously in the streets up front, accompanied by the clash of weapons, leaving a fresh crimson trace on the ground. At this moment, the majestic yet tranquil capital city, like a dying white deer, jolted awake, erupting with a final mournful cry!

"It's all because of me..."

A strange feeling arose in the heart of the Huitu samurai. Suddenly, he no longer felt like just a weed in the war, but rather so grand, so significant, able to decide everything, like the sacred cocoa...

"Necali, who is the inside man!"

A loud shout suddenly jolted Puap awake, also shattering his brief illusion, plunging him back into the dust of the era.

The Huitu samurai looked up, only to see a young samurai with sharp brows and bright eyes, carrying a longbow and holding a war club, quickly rushing in from the city gate. Subsequently, the Mexica captain in front saluted respectfully and gestured in his own direction. The young warrior suddenly turned around, revealing a pair of eyes emitting a cold sharpness, walking over with a chilling authority. This face... it looked somewhat familiar.

"You, quickly! Take us to the Palace of Wind!"

Black Wolf Toltec, his eyes filled with murderous intent, disdainfully sized up Puap and abruptly grabbed his garment, shouting out loud.

"Lead the way! I, Black Wolf Toltec, will achieve the greatest merit! Ha ha, the Marshal is mine, the King is mine, the chief of Tarasco is also mine!"

Hearing this unforgettable voice, an old militiaman nearby lowered his head in fear, a nightmare from beyond the city flashing through his mind. This was the "Black Wolf Warrior" they had once battled against! Panic also surfaced in Puap's eyes. He quietly acknowledged and then silently led the way with his brothers. Black Wolf Toltec shouted loudly, and a thousand Mexica vanguard troops immediately followed with high-held torches.

Qinchongcan City, historically rich and vast in area, was also clearly ordered and rigidly hierarchical, bearing the marks of a slave society. From the sturdy bluestone city walls to the very center's "House of Wind" Akatla, the capital was distinctly divided into four different class zones.

The outermost layer, which occupied over sixty percent of the area, housed over fifty thousand villagers, townsmen, and slaves. This was the lower layer of the capital, also housing the main force of the conscripted militia and Tekos barbarians.

The civilian district's roads were complicated, but Puap knew them well, navigating without any hesitation. He had lived in the capital for thirty years, spending most of his time in this area. The roads here were only wide enough for a few people to pass, flanked by low and densely packed thatched houses. All around, vast stretches of these houses were completely dark, void of any light, though occasionally the suppressed cries of children could be heard, followed by the fearful low curses of adults.

Black Wolf Toltec, cautious, raised his shield and surveyed the surroundings. The marching torches continued unfaltering, pushing forward. As they proceeded deeper into the heart of the city, the roads grew broader. Among the large swaths of simple civilian communities, tall continuous stone buildings began to appear, with fires burning between them.

Puap knew these were the dwellings of civilian samurai families and small merchants of the capital, now also housing scattered troops of barbarians and militia. As the conflict intensified, the Tekos people became increasingly defiant. In order to control the numerous tribal people, the chief both bestowed favors and enforced discipline, placating them gently, all the while deliberately scattering them by tribal units and arranging nearby stationed militia to maintain a precarious balance in the capital.

"Ahead there are two stations... one with two hundred militia, one with five hundred barbarians,"

warned the Huitu samurai cautiously. Black Wolf Toltec glanced at him, nodded casually, and continued on without stopping.

Suddenly, hundreds of conscripted militiamen appeared on the street side. They, seeing the approaching massive Mexica legion, frantically raised their long spears, attempting to form a spear formation.

Black Wolf Toltec roared like a tiger and led a few dozen trusted aides directly into their midst! He fiercely swung his war club, easily slaughtering the disorganized militia, occasionally letting out a horrific roar. Within mere moments, the militiamen were devastated by the fierce charges! They dropped their weapons and turned to flee, their cries of terror mingling as they jostled each other, only to be caught and cut down like straw by the ruthless samurai.

Among the gradually fading screams, Chiwaco walked forward barefoot, his expression calm. Blood covered the narrow path, dampening his feet, which felt somewhat warm and somewhat slippery. Hence, he stopped, slowly looking down.

Chapter 473 - The Crimson Road_2

Under the flickering firelight, the Capital City Militia lay dying everywhere, surrounded by the cold bodies of villagers, and the road beneath his feet had turned crimson. The old militiaman paused for a moment, tightened his grip on his long spear and continued forward.

Not far from the militia's quarters was a wide courtyard, now in chaos, clearly disturbed by the fierce slaughter. Led by a Tekos tribe Chieftain, dozens of Tekos warriors, with a ferocious demeanor and disheveled hair, charged out of the yard to confront the oncoming Mexica legion head-on!

Toltec roared again. Clutching his blood-dripping war club, he launched himself violently forward, smashing to death the nearest enemies.

The tribe Chieftain's eyes bulged as he looked at the elite Samurai filling the street and their dark green Leather Armor, his mouth agape in horror. Then, seeing the unstoppable Black Wolf rapidly approaching, he shuddered violently, turned, and fled, shouting urgently.

"Surrender! Surrender! The compliant citizens of the Volcano are willing to surrender to the powerful Eastern Chieftain!"

"Black Wolf warrior, they wish to surrender!"

Hearing the Tekos's cries, Puap quickly chased after Toltec, shouting the translation.

Toltec stopped, frowning slightly. He looked toward the tribe Chieftain, who had already fled into the courtyard, surrounded by hundreds of tribal militiamen.

"Take twenty men, guard the entrance, leave it to the reinforcements behind. The rest of the Samurai, move forward!"

The Vanguard Army advanced once again, more Samurai walking abreast, the buildings on either side no longer dim. Occasionally, squares were interspersed among the buildings, with a fortress-like residence further away.

Puap pursed his lips. This area was the district of high-ranking Samurai and Craftsmen, also where his family resided. The squares between the buildings were used for regular assemblies and community trade. The fortress-like residence was the official Craftsman center, where thousands of lifelong Craftsmen were tightly supervised. They obeyed the Royal Family's commands, produced a vast amount of weapons and equipment, and were a vital source of strength for the Defending Army!

After several battles, the Samurai of the Capital City had suffered severe losses, one in ten remaining. Therefore, this area was the most empty, and the Vanguard Army passed through with little resistance. Toltec gave the massive Craftsman center a distant glance, smacked his lips regretfully, and continued moving forward to kill.

Soon, the cobblestone main road appeared beneath everyone's feet, with many firelights twinkling not far away. A group of Tarasco Samurai rushed over hastily, unable to Formations, they were scattered by the fierce Black Wolf. Toltec launched a swift attack, hacking the leading Warrior Captain to death in a few strokes, unstoppable like a savage beast! Following that, the Vanguard Samurai surged forward, and after a series of screams, the main road turned red with blood.

Chiwaco clasped his long spear tightly, keeping up with the footsteps of the Mexica Vanguard, stepping across the blood-soaked battlefield. Red footprints stretched forward, and the view on both sides suddenly expanded. The old militiaman, with concerns in his heart, carefully observed the unfamiliar sights along the way, clucking in amazement.

"This, this is where Great Nobility lords live! ...Ah? All stone, can't even see a thatched roof..."

This area was already the Great Nobility district at the center of the city, usually off-limits to commoners, including ordinary Samurai. Under the firelight, the old militiaman looked around, distant solid White Stone houses, beautiful water well gardens, and tall pines and cypress trees that dazzled and filled him with longing.

The Nobility of the city had been alarmed by the turn of events. They quickly summoned their nearby private soldiers and Escorts, and soon figures moved about the gardens and houses, flashing with cold light. There were about a thousand private soldiers in this area, each controlled by several dozen Nobility of varying ranks. Under the pressure of the Chief Minister, the Nobility had no chance to assemble. Now faced with sudden calamity, they could only defend their family estates and fight nervously on their own.

Toltec dodged an incoming Copper Spear with a hop, and then, with a swift sideways strike, he cut down the foremost attacking Tarasco Nobility. The blades of trusted aides clashed on either side, hacking and slashing, and a group of Nobility's private soldiers obstructing the way was annihilated. Black Wolf

surveyed the surroundings, glanced at the Nobility's private soldiers holding defensive positions further away, swung his hand forward, and led the charge!

No Guidance was needed now. Following the clear main road, the Vanguard Army ignored the scattered enemies nearby and quickly made their way to a palace thirty meters tall. Brilliant lights were lit all around the palace, bringing perpetual brightness, and exquisite verandas stood high in the sky, as if they were the abode of Divine Descendants on earth. This was the last palace and Temple area, the Palace of Wind of the Tarasco!

Black Wolf looked up, his brow deeply furrowed. The brick and stone foundation ahead was several meters high, with grand steps rising in sequence to uphold a majestic and solid wood and stone palace. Above the palace, wooden pavilions were stacked while numerous sturdy stone towers surrounded it. Hundreds of Tarasco samurai were pouring out of the palace, many wearing Hummingbird leather armor. These loyal family warriors brandished shields and waved copper spears, forming formations on the advantageous high ground. Then, someone brought out a longbow!

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

A merciless hail of arrows shot forth, accompanied by the shrill sound of the wind, "thwack"ing into the leather armor. A chorus of screams suddenly erupted around Black Wolf, as more than a dozen Mexica samurai toppled over in an instant. Black Wolf's pupils dilated sharply, and with an agile roll to the side, he ducked behind the nearby houses. Leaning against the wall, he carefully observed and saw that a hundred elite archers were perched atop the stone towers, firing their arrows!

"Damn it, how did the enemy gather so fast?...Front line, raise shields and charge; back line, scatter and shoot! Split two teams of samurai to encircle from both sides!"

Toltec waved a small flag and shouted orders. Then, he took a longbow off his back, and with just a quick aim, he released an arrow swift as lightning!

"Hit!"

"Ah!" An archer let out a brief cry of pain before plummeting from the top of the stone tower, crashing to the ground with a "thud," and the sound was abruptly silenced.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!" The Tarasco samurai in front of the palace also began to release their arrows in unison. Even more arrows came down from above at intersecting angles, striking down dozens in the frontline vanguard. Moments later, the warriors in the rear returned fire with a volley of arrows. More than a dozen figures suddenly fell from the high pavilions, bursting into eye-searing blooms of red.

Soon, more than three hundred vanguard warriors, holding shields, stormed up the stone steps. They roared and swung their war clubs, clashing with the defending Tarasco spear formation, falling intermittently. At that moment, in front of the magnificent Palace of Wind, arrows crisscrossed fiercely, weapons clashed brutally, and the air was filled with the stench of death!

Behind the Mexica samurai, Huitu Puap crouched down and carefully hid at the edge of a building. He looked at the fierce battle raging above and below the palace, his heart full of complex emotions.

As a trusted aide highly regarded by the Chief Minister, he had been to the Palace of Wind many times and was thoroughly familiar with the situation. He certainly knew that the main force of loyal samurai were gathered here, ready to suppress the nobility in the city at any moment. He also knew that the stone towers on either side housed elite archers, and a secret passage lay behind the palace walls. He even knew that the Chief Minister of the Hummingbird was on the highest pavilion, with the Royal Family's heir by the Chief's side!

All this critical intelligence, Puap kept buried in his heart. He had no intention of telling the courageous Black Wolf, nor had he told anyone else, except for...

Amidst the whistling arrows, the aged militiaman Chiwaco cautiously raised his shield, following the shadows of the walls, tiptoeing over. Behind him, a dozen trusted militiamen, all clad in Hummingbird leather armor and wielding sharp copper spears.

"Master, are you ready? The time we spoke of... has come..."

"Hu..."

Puap exhaled heavily, then took a deep breath of the sweet, pungent air. In that moment, his eyes flickered with an unusual glow, like a dog transforming into a wolf.

"Let's go... May the Chief Divine protect us..."

"Good. May the Chief Divine protect us."

Chiwaco's aged face broke into a smile, his feet stained with bright red. His deep prayers scattered into the air, as dark as the night itself.

Chapter 474 - Revenge!

Moon Star was hidden, and the dim sky lacked any light; a mournful night breeze carried screams of death. At the magnificent top level of the Palace of Wind, lonely wind chimes sounded their melancholic tunes. The curtains of the Three Gods fluttered in the wind, shielding the murals of the Divine Eagle and the Hummingbird, both being simultaneously concealed, turning into the dust of history. In the clear light of the candle, there stood a silently imposing figure in front of the window, speechless like a frozen painting.

The Chief Minister of Tarasco, Jinjinni, alone, with hands behind his back, gazed at the battleground outside the palace.

In just over half a year, his hair had turned entirely white, his face had deeply aged... only his eyes, still as profound as distant stars, heavy as massive mountains. He watched the widespread blaze across the Capital City as if watching the last fireworks; watching the fierce combat beneath the palace, he felt a serene finality in his heart.

Shortly after, two guards, faces grim, came running. Not far behind them followed a dozen warriors of the House of Hummingbird, most somberly walking with bowed heads. From a distance, the guards called out loudly.

"Chief, Warrior Captain Puap requests an audience! He says there's urgent intelligence to report!"

Jinjinni turned around, his gaze calm as he looked inside the palace. In this grand Palace of Wind, not many guards remained on duty. Most warriors were engaged in a desperate battle at the front gate, a few guarded the rear exits. Only a handful were left by his side. Of course, even if a thousand more warriors were present, the outcome of this night had already been sealed.

The dozen Hummingbird warriors soon entered the palace, everyone's armor stained with blood, expressions pale and heavy. Puap quietly surveyed, his gaze meeting that of the Chief. It was still as

sharp as an eagle's, as if capable of piercing the heart. The Huitu warrior, feeling guilty, lowered his head, a trace of panic evident on his face.

"Puap, what are you doing here?"

The Chief's words were calm and profound.

"I... I have urgent intelligence!"

Somehow, faced with the Chief's calmness, fear surged again in the heart of the Huitu warrior, even though the other was unarmed.

"...Speak."

The deep voice hinted at age and exhaustion.

"...Chief, I... I am sorry!..."

Puap raised his head, looking at the aged Chief, at that tired face, and suddenly tears of genuine emotion flowed, his face full of remorse. This was the Family Head he had loyally served for over twenty years.

"Chief... someone opened the secret door of South City, let the Mexica people into the city... I... I lost the gate of South City..."

"Who?!"

Finally, a deep anger arose in the Chief's words, like the roar of an aged beast.

"I... I..."

Faced with the interrogation of the Family Head, Puap's knees weakened, and he "thud" fell to the ground. He cried bitterly, explaining from the depth of his heart. Every word was true, every emotion genuine.

"The defending army's morale is lost... There was no light at night... It was chaotic at that moment... Nepal... he... he died in battle right before my eyes... I am sorry for him! I am sorry, Chief!... Oh..."

Low sobs sounded, Jinjinni did not speak. He watched Puap lying on the ground, crying, and after a long while, he let out a long sigh.

"Little Nepal... Ah, little Huitu, get up! At this moment, punishing you has no meaning."

Jinjinni sighed, uncharacteristically saying much. In that fragile moment, he seemed just like an ordinary old man.

"Little Huitu, I have no one left to trust... Your arrival with these few men is timely, I'll give you one last task to carry out!"

"Chief?..."

Puap immediately stopped crying. He stood up, cautiously watching Jinjinni, still showing a trace of fear on his face.

Outside the window, the noise of shouting and the whistling arrows nailing on the palace building, making a "thud thud" muffled sound, intensified. The Chief of the Hummingbirds nodded his head, raising his voice.

"Guards! Bring Prince Shatini over, and also the prepared goods."

Three more guards entered the palace from outside. One of them held the hand of a child about seven or eight years old, who was crying. The other guards carried several solid bamboo baskets.

"Puap, I am giving you one final task. Take advantage of the chaos, and lead Prince Shatini out of the city!"

Chief Jinjinni motioned, and Puap stepped forward. Then, the Chief passed the child's hand into the hands of the Huitu warrior.

"Little Huitu, the other princes of the Predecessor Monarch, I have already arranged for warriors to escort them away. Shatini is the youngest, and his birth was most unusual. His mother is a Tekos, his maternal grandfather a Great Chief of the Colima Mountain Region. According to the law of the Kingdom, his right to succession originally was the least..."

Having said this, Jinjinni sighed softly, his expression becoming resolute again.

"Puap, I entrust Shatini to you. From now on, his life is your life! Remember, although he is not the eldest, he is the prince with the highest promise for restoring the kingdom! The Capital City is about to fall, without the army of the Capital City, it will be difficult for regional commanders to obey a young lord, and they might surrender to the Mexica people one by one..."

Take him to Colima! His blood carries the lineage of both the Royal Family of the Divine Eagle and the Noble Chiefs of the Tekos. The Great Chief of Colima is ambitious, always seeking an alliance through marriage with the Royal Family... He will see Shatini as the perfect heir, enabling the maximum inheritance of the kingdom's legacy after its fall! This is the last hope..."

"I have suppressed the Tekos all my life, unwilling to let them peer into the kingdom, that is why I kept Shatini till the last... Your appearance, perhaps it's the will of the Three Gods... Take this Jade Talisman of the Chief Minister, leave through the north gate! Arranged boats are at the northern lake... Also, take these bamboo baskets, they contain gems, gold and silver, jade artifacts, feathers... and a wooden board of inheritance. Lastly..."

Chapter 475 - Revenge!_2

The Chief Minister stepped forward a few steps, retrieved an emerald gemstone the size of a fist from a hidden compartment, and set it atop a basket of feathers. Under the bright candle light, the giant emerald gemstone was translucent and pure, refracting a soul-stirring radiance, like a splendid illusion.

Puap's eyes instantly widened, his pupils filled with the sparkling gemstone. The eyes of the militia were also captivated by the immense gemstone. Such a sacred gemstone was certainly rare in the world, invaluable.

"This is a gift for the Great Chief, from the distant southern Rainforest, a treasured heirloom of the Royal Family."

The Chief's words were calm yet stern.

"Remember! You may use the other valuables, but the gemstones and the Prince, you must hand them all to the Chief!"

Puap bowed his head, not daring to look directly at the Chief's profound and weathered gaze, and responded softly.

"Yes..."

"Puap, time is of the essence, hurry and take the Prince away!"

"Oh, Chief Minister, what about you..."

"Go!"

The Chief Minister waved his hand and turned around wearily. He gazed at the mural of the Divine Eagle and the Hummingbird, watching the Divine Eagle soar then fall, the Hummingbird circle then cry mournfully, his eyes already showing resignation to death. Beneath the mural lay an unlit torch and a row of legacy wooden planks.

Chiwaco glanced at the emotionally shaken Puap, shook his head slightly. He and his brothers exchanged looks, then slowly dispersed, approaching the sobbing guards, and then suddenly thrust their copper spears!

"Ugh! Ah! Ah!..."

The cries of death echoed in the grand hall, piercing into everyone's hearts in an instant. The sharp copper spears swung mercilessly, aiming for vital points. In just a few breaths, five guards lay dead or dying. Blood, for the first time, flowed in the Royal Family's grand hall!

Jinjinni spun around, his eyes wide with shock. He incredulously watched the traditionally loyal Huitu samurai.

"Puap! What are you doing?!"

"Ah... Chief Minister... I..."

Puap stuttered, his face flushed with shame, unsure of what to say. Even though he had been prepared, at this moment, his mind was still out of control.

"I... as a Mexica..."

"Pu... ap... Pu!"

Jinjinni's voice was as cold as ice at the bottom of a lake. He let out a bitter laugh, his eyes seeming to burn with the darkest flames.

"Ha! I actually misjudged you?! The loyalty and honor of generations of the Huitu Clan, today are to be destroyed by your hands!"

"Chief Minister... I am sorry... just surrender!... I promise, the Mexica will embrace you and preserve your clan!"

Puap, ashamed, bowed his head and no longer dared to look at the Chief Minister.

Jinjinni coldly watched the samurai in front of him, like an eagle eying a turkey. Then, he looked toward Prince Shatini not far away, the young Prince, although full of fear, had stopped crying and clutched the dagger at his waist.

A trace of reassurance and expectation flickered in the Chief Minister's eyes, which then turned into sorrow and despair. Suddenly, a severe pain shot through his waist, instantly draining all his strength!

"Ah!..."

The elderly Chief Minister bit his lip, emitting a suppressed cry of pain, his forehead instantly covered in sweat.

"Old man Chi... what... what are you doing?!"

"What am I doing?"

Chiwaco coldly smiled, then stirred his long spear again. Jinjinni could no longer stand firmly and collapsed sideways. Bright red fluid flowed swiftly from the wound in his waist, further staining his white hair.

"What am I doing?! Great Master, at this time, how could you be soft-hearted? How could the Great Chief surrender? If the Mexica accepted the Great Master and let him continue his reign, what place would there be for us? Great Master, you really are like a foolish squirrel, dropping the corn in your hands at the sight of an acorn; paralyzed with fear when confronting a cat... How could your brothers trust their lives to you like this?"

Hearing the old militia's words and sensing the veiled threat within them, Puap turned his back, finally whispering low.

"Make it quick, let there be no pain!"

Jinjinni lay on the ground, powerlessly gazing ahead. The legacy wood planks were stained red with people's blood. The divine curtain no longer fluttered. Looking up from the ground, the ancient murals of the flying Divine Eagle and Hummingbird were both plummeting.

"Haha, Chief Minister, the great Chief Minister! Destroying our village, destroying my home, you old white-headed bird, finally captured in my hands!"

The old militia pulled out the long spear, then thrust it again into Jinjinni's aging chest and abdomen. Listening to the Chief Minister's painful moans, Chiwaco laughed loudly, his laughter filled with the joy of revenge!

"Haha, this spear thrust, is for my wife! She was with me for decades, and in the end, not even a corpse was left! Come, this one is for my son. He left his parents, suffered untold hardships, and I could only pretend he was dead! Haha, Chief Minister, does your heart ache now?!"

Chiwaco laughed maniacally, his laughter echoing through the palace, even causing tears to flow. He let go of the spear stuck in the ribs, bent down in front of the Chief Minister, and then pulled out the short dagger from his waist.

"Haha, this dagger, is for my daughter! She was just so small when drafted into the logistics camp!... Draft after draft, the Mexica never conscripted one of our own!... Great Master, with a wave of your

hand, we were sent thousands of miles away to die like weeds!... you wave again, and our village is gone, all that's left when we return is a cursed old man...

Chapter 476 - Revenge!_3

"Chief Minister, you sit in a palace like it's the Divine Kingdom, your eyes looking up at the high heavens. Can you see us below you? Ha ha, I don't believe in the three gods, they are all dead! I only believe in my brothers' weapons! Ha ha, now, your neck, do you feel our coldness?"

The old Militia seemed crazed. He laughed with tears streaming down his face. He pulled out the bloodstained Dagger and held it across Jinjinni's throat. The sharp Obsidian Short Dagger pierced the skin, and the Chief Minister closed his eyes, forever dimming his profound gaze.

"Ah, ha ha!"

Chiwaco, using all his strength, pressed down the Dagger. Then, standing up amidst the shocked stares of the Militia, he laughed wildly as he fumbled in his chest, eventually shaking out a bean and forcefully throwing it onto the Chief's corpse.

"Ha ha, ha ha! This biggest bean... is your debt... and now you've repaid your debt!"

"Old Chi...you...you...have you gone mad?!...How could you sever the Chief Minister's head!..."

Puap's eyes widened, staring at this comrade so familiar yet so transformed, a vague fear arising in his heart. This Chiwaco of the night was a darkness and crimson he had never seen before.

"Ha ha, old Pu, how could I miss such a grand deed? We can't carry the body... Let's wrap the head, it's easier to carry."

Their eyes met, but the old Militia's were clear, and within that clarity was an unprecedented joyous sneer. He grabbed a piece of sacred fabric, quickly wrapped Jinjinni's head, then picked up the huge Emerald Gemstone with praise.

"Tsk, tsk, so round, so bright! Just like the roundest moon... I, old Chi, have never seen something this beautiful in my life!..."

Weizti shuddered as he watched his uncle, who while speaking of beauty, kept his eyes fixed continually on the head. The uncle smiled as he buried the blood-dripping package and the beautiful gemstone together in the Feathers, then shouldered the lightweight bamboo basket of Feathers.

"You dumb logs, what are you staring at?! Hurry and carry these baskets of treasures on your backs. Master, quickly knock out the Prince beside you. We need to go now, the Black Wolf warriors of Mexica are coming up!"

The skirmish outside the window gradually quietened, but the killing shouts below the towers were becoming more imminent. Urged by time, the Militia obeyed and shouldered their bamboo baskets, the heavy gemstones and Gold and Silver bringing a delighted burden.

Puap turned his head and saw Prince Shatini raising a Dagger. Huitu Samurai quickly stepped forward, seized the Prince's weapon, and struck him twice on the jaw, knocking the Prince unconscious. Then, he himself carried the Prince as if he was the greatest treasure.

"Tell me, where is the Chief Minister of Tarasco?! Where are the Princes of the Royal Family?!"

In the corridor below, Toltec's roar was now distinctly audible. He seized a guard and bellowed, but the man kept his lips tightly sealed.

Hearing the familiar battle cries, old Militia Chiwaco waved his hand, and the group obediently ran towards the back of the palace. There was an emergency passage there, the same route they had taken when they were allowed entry.

As the night deepened and the palace elongated, the shouts and roars gradually faded. The old Militia strode ahead quickly toward the palace exit, Puap closely followed, with the other Militia trailing behind. The Huitu Samurai wore a complex expression, dazed all the way to the palace gate, before he quietly asked.

"Old Chi, where do we head now? To the lake by the north gate? Or south gate to find the Mexica commander?"

"Neither, we go to the east gate."

Chapter 477 - Stealing Credit

The firelight gradually kindled in the majestic capital city, and the night breeze carried sounds from afar. Everywhere were various boiling shouts, along with hoarse howling, as if the end of days had descended.

"Look to the south!"

Chiwaco stopped in his tracks. He stood on the high stone stairs outside the palace, gazing at South City, which was bathed in the red glow of torches. A surge of dark green flooded in, seemingly endless and unstoppable, threatening to engulf everything in its path.

Puap turned at the sound and saw the tide branching out, advancing to the front of the palace and the temple district, revealing the Mexica Samurai clad in leather armor, fierce and grim. He exclaimed in surprise.

"Gods! So many! All samurai!"

Chiwaco nodded gravely.

"There are too many samurai in the south! The army has entered the city; they are like a pack of hungry wolves with red eyes, always ready to hunt. If a few of us go south, clad in the Kingdom's leather armor, and run headfirst into samurai from who knows where... we might be torn to pieces by the wolf pack before we can pull out the jade talisman to explain... Head east! We must leave the city quickly to meet with the Mexica Prince!"

Hearing this, Puap looked down at his leather armor. In this moment, the Hummingbird's family emblem was glaringly conspicuous. He gritted his teeth, shook his head, and asked in a deep voice.

"Throw away this leather armor?"

"No, tonight, an extra layer of leather armor means an extra chance at life... Foolish wood, bring the clothes I prepared, let everyone put on a robe over it."

Hearing his uncle's command, Weizti took out a cloth bundle and opened it, revealing a dozen or so black robes of civilian style. Puap widened his eyes in surprise, looked at the well-prepared Chiwaco whose face was always smiling. Soon, everyone put on the black robes, blending into the shadows of the night, becoming even less conspicuous.

"Go!"

About ten people carrying bamboo baskets and war trophies hurriedly left. The splendid Palace of Wind was still lit up, but the fierce sounds of fighting gradually extinguished in the wind. Then, a furious shout suddenly exploded, echoing around the palace like the roar of a heroic spirit!

"Ah! Who stole my Black Wolf's glory in battle!"

Chiwaco smiled, looking back. Hundreds of steps away in front of the palace, soaked in blood. Hundreds of samurai lay scattered, fallen on the cold stone steps, becoming just as cold corpses. The bright Hummingbird fell on the damaged leather armor, reflecting the all-night lights of the high buildings, like a stunning painting.

The old militiaman's eyes gleamed, pausing for a moment. He turned his head, gave Puap a faint glance, then silently pulled out a pea and stealthily scattered it into the wind.

"The leading family's samurai... they're all here now... "

"Old Qi, what are you saying?"

"I'm saying, let's hurry. The Mexica Samurai have gone to the Temple!"

Puap looked up to see the towering "House of Wind," Akatla, standing at the very center of the Capital City, with the blazing Sacred Fire lit at its grand summit! Priests of the three gods inhaled divine smoke, circling the perpetual Sacred Fire, dancing frantically and possessed, occasionally scattering yellow powder. The priests' singing carried far, as mournful as a dying night owl. Before long, a desolate howling drifted into the wind, laced with the desperate, final prayers. And among those prayers was the Mexica people's frenzied shouting!

"Kill the three gods! The Chief Divine is most high and mighty! Glory to the warriors of the divine battle!"

The pyramid's shadow was vast and overwhelming. In its cast darkness, thousands of Mexica legion surrounded the "House of Wind." Shining war clubs were waved in combat, each layer surging towards the summit; whooshing arrows "whizzed" skyward, pinning the temple's defenders to the ground.

The temple's samurai, numbered only in the hundreds, had no powerful longbows. They futilely threw their javelins and stones, their numbers quickly dwindling in the fight. Soon, the Mexica legion had reached the summit!

"The three gods are calling us! The Stone of the Dead opens the gate of the Moon God! The blue fire is the path to the Divine Kingdom!"

The lead priest shouted out for the last time! Then, he violently threw the torch in his hand onto the temple's ground. The dim blue flames instantly surged like a tide, toxic smoke spreading in all directions, engulfing the priests in an instant, also claiming the nearest Mexica Samurai. Thousands of pounds of the Stone of the Dead burst into flames at this moment, carrying everything in the temple into a world of ashes!

"Ah, this! The three gods... dead?... Chief Divine... most high..."

Seeing this, Puap shuddered deeply and hastened to turn and flee with Chiwaco. Faith and loyalty had completely crumbled that night, and his spirit had already collapsed into nothingness. The Huitu samurai half-closed his eyes, wandering in a daze for who knows how long, when the sounds of battle once again erupted by his side. He opened his eyes once more to find they had reached the nobility district.

Chiwaco led his brothers hiding in a garden, carefully observing the movements ahead. A large contingent of the Mexica legion, brandishing weapons, had firmly surrounded a magnificent estate. These devout samurai shouted slogans of the gods, their necks adorned with Hummingbird Sun amulets. They mercilessly swung their weapons, killing the resisting escorts, then chopped down the nobles in front of them. Many of these samurai were even dressed in Otomi attire!

The nobility initially resisted valiantly, cursing loudly, then laid down their weapons, kneeling to beg for mercy. The Otomi Warriors remained expressionless, mercilessly executing the commands of the Commander-in-Chief. Soon, the lavish estate was filled with the bodies of the nobility,

Chapter 478 - Stealing Credit_2

Chests of gold and silver fabrics were plundered and taken away, followed by large groups of young womenfolk, who were bound into a line by the samurai with ropes.

In this era inherently defined by rank, wealth was wholly concentrated in the hands of the hereditary nobility. The great nobility lived unimaginably extravagant lives, while the samurai were greatly consuming, and the commoners were destitute, with virtually no savings.

After the battle, a large troop of Mexica samurai, shouting the names of the gods, advanced to the next mansion. Chiwaco also continued cautiously forward with his brethren and soon arrived at the Craftsman District.

There weren't many Mexica samurai here, nor were there troops sent to plunder. The large contingent of samurai gathered at the massive craftsman center, taking the craftsmen into custody and providing protection en masse, numbering over a thousand. Occasionally, small squads of samurai, bloodthirsty with rage, would blindly charge here, only to be ordered back to the Nobility District by their commanders.

Puap looked towards the location of his family estate and then silently stepped forward. He patted the shoulder of the old militiaman and indicated for him to lead the way. They followed a narrow path, circled around the craftsman center, and returned to the expansive Civilian District.

The Civilian District of South City had gradually become calm, but this part of the East City was still embroiled in fighting. Throngs of Tarasco militiamen scattered across the streets, with Mexica samurai chasing and slashing behind them; occasionally, some would drop their weapons and surrender. Swarms of Tekos brutes charged out of the enclosures they had been trapped in, like uncaged hyenas, looting the nearest houses with roars. They grabbed anything from cakes, jerky, fabrics, cocoa, to exquisite pottery, and then set them ablaze. Flames raged, smoke billowed, and terrified Tarasco civilians fled from their houses. They were like wild rabbits dashing in all directions, filled with panic as if their burrows were collapsing, avoiding all armed predators.

The blazing fire soon caught the attention of the Mexica legion. A large number of samurai stormed in, easily striking down the tribesmen with their bulky and small bags. Then, shouting, they followed the orders of the Prince, putting in effort to extinguish the flames or isolate the fire scene.

Chiwaco, with a ferocious expression, thrust his spear and impaled two Tekos brutes who were running towards them. Then, he worriedly looked back at South City, unable to discern the exact location of the fire. Puap, carrying the Prince, urged softly,

"Old Chi, this way. The East City gate is near! Hopefully, there's still a Defending Army holding out that can get us down the city walls!"

As he spoke, he touched the two differently shaped Jade Talismans in his chest, preparing for all eventualities.

The old militiaman, with lips pursed, silently led his brethren forward. Just as the group had turned a street corner and seen the dense lanterns at the East City gate, they collided head-on with a large squadron of Mexica samurai marching quickly.

Coyote Family Head Coyote was taken aback and stopped in his tracks. He drew the weapon at his waist and scrutinized the group that had suddenly appeared. His gaze lingered on the more than a dozen long spears, then swept over the black robes of civilian style.

"Eh, a dozen scattered militia? Come, kill them all!"

Coyote indifferently raised his hand, and dozens of samurai drew their weapons, spreading out to encircle them.

Puap had just taken out the Prince's Jade Talisman and was about to speak when the old militiaman quietly waved his hand. Taking a step forward, he brought out a connecting token, bowed, and said with a grin,

"Master, we, the Alliance's inside operatives! Obedient, good people!"

Hearing the Mexica language that was not entirely fluent, Coyote tilted his head warily, and a trusted aide stepped forward to take the wood token. After examining it for a moment and seeing the Hunter symbol on it, the aide respectfully turned and reported back.

"Family Head, it's indeed a token from the Northern Legion, belonging to the Scout Vanguard. They must be the inside operatives in the city."

At this news, Coyote's expression slightly relaxed. He observed the attire of this group of inside operatives, his brow furrowing with curiosity as he asked,

"The army has already entered the city; since you are inside operatives, what are you doing here?"

"We need to leave the city, to report the latest intelligence,"

Puap answered cautiously.

Coyote's eyes flickered, his gaze slowly scanning the group's bamboo baskets, noting the vaguely exposed Wealth. Then his gaze settled sharply on the child Puap was carrying on his shoulders. The Coyote Family Head sniffed lightly, then advanced with a dozen trusted aides,

"You, don't move! Who is he?"

Coyote narrowed his eyes and raised the torch in his left hand. He looked at the child's arm and neck, noting the pale complexion and delicate skin, which stood out starkly against the samurai's rugged appearance. A cold smile spread across Coyote's face as he tightened his grip on his War Club in his right hand.

Sensing the sharp murderous intent, Puap's pupils suddenly constricted, and he too reached for his own weapon.

"Ah, Master, this is the Prince! Captured, to be presented to the great Alliance. To you, the noble Commander-in-Chief, for you... We, only want, the plundered Wealth."

Seeing this, the old militiaman hurriedly bowed, a smile plastered across his face as he stepped forward. He tugged at Puap's arm and carefully lowered the silent Prince Shatini to the ground. Then, waving his hands, the old militiaman pulled the furious Puap away, cautiously leading the militiamen back.

"Oh? The Prince? The Tarasco Prince!"

At this, Coyote's eyes lit up. He bent down to inspect, checking the Prince's pearly teeth, examining the uncalloused small hands, and finally noticing the Divine Eagle tattoo on the neck, erupting with elation.

"Ah, truly the Prince of Tarasco?! A noble, sacred Sacrifice! The Alliance's superior battle merit!"

Chapter 479 - Stealing Credit_3

Hearing this, the confidants all revealed expressions of joy and visibly relaxed.

"Hmm... Prince... military exploits... hey!"

The eyes of the weasel became even greedier, his greed tinged with a hidden murderous intent. He lifted his head, and seeing the insiders stealthily retreating, he shouted loudly.

"Stop! Put down the treasures in the bamboo basket! Otherwise, I will catch you all and kill every one of you! ..."

"Damn it! This is what I got at the risk of my life, after so much scheming and killing...,"

Puap could no longer hold back and burst into an angry roar.

"Put it down, put it all down! Master, please put it down!"

The old militiaman shouted urgently. He raised his hand, personally helped Puap to unload the bamboo basket, and then signaled the surrounding militia with his eyes.

"Throw it out! Throw!"

Seeing the joy on the face of the opposing commander, Chiwaco abruptly shouted and smashed the bamboo basket toward Coyote. The weasel family head was quick to dodge with a swift sidestep. Even though the other old brothers were reluctant, they did not hesitate to throw the bamboo baskets out.

"Clang! Dang!" The bamboo baskets hit the ground, making a crisp crashing sound. A large amount of gold, silver, and jewels scattered across the floor, glimmering brilliantly and tinkling like enticing spring water.

"Flee!"

Chiwaco shouted loudly and turned to run. Puap reluctantly glanced back but still led the militiamen to escape together. In just a brief moment, the crowd that was full of spoils was left with nothing but the feather-filled bamboo basket on the old militiaman's back.

"Family Head, should we go after them?"

The weasel's eyes flickered. He watched over ten militiamen run away quickly, then looked at the scattered wealth... After hesitating for a few moments, he shook his head.

"Heh! They're smart, I'll spare their lives today!"

Afterward, Coyote no longer hid the greed in his eyes. He waved his hand broadly and shouted.

"Hurry! Collect all the wealth on the ground, no hiding any! I am not a stingy man! Divide it into ten parts, two for Her Majesty, one for the captain, one for His Highness, and one to be rewarded to you all!"

The confidants let out a low cheer. This distribution ratio was the old rule of the nobility's private army. Weasel felt no guilt, pleased with his own generosity. What, you ask about the remaining five portions? Naturally, they all belong to the master!

"I never thought guarding the gate would yield such a harvest, truly the Chief Divine is generous! Ha ha!"

Coyote revealed a satisfied smile and walked toward the Prince, who had now woken up. His eyes shone as if he had seen a rare treasure.

"Boy, don't pretend to be asleep, who do you think you can fool? Come on, tell us your family name! ..."

The night breeze swept through, and young Shatini opened his eyes. He stared defiantly with a trembling body at the swelling crowd of Mexica samurai approaching him...

"Old Chi, we've run so far in one go!... Where are you heading? Are we not leaving the city anymore?"

"Master, the east gate is blocked, and the west gate is definitely the same. These Mexica seem to be not with the Mexica captain... it was really dangerous just now! We'll detour to the southern civilian district to hide for a while, then meet up with my daughter and the families of our brothers!"

Chiwaco glanced at the continually loyal dozen brothers, slowed down, and whispered to the crowd. Then, he patted the feather bamboo basket on his back and encouraged with a smile.

"The most important things are here! As soon as we see the Mexica Highness, everyone will have a share of the merits!"

The group awkwardly gathered again and trudged forward. As they moved, the situation in South City gradually stabilized, occasionally encountering Long Spear troops blocking the streets.

Chiwaco patiently observed for a long time but could not distinguish whether they were samurai or militia. These vine-hat wearing spear soldiers focused on cooperation, their actions stiff, but their discipline quite strict. Operating in squads of hundreds, they controlled key intersections, extinguished sources of fire, and jabbed to death those who created chaos. In densely packed places, some spear soldiers stepped out of the ranks, soothing the panicked civilians of the capital city with unusually skilled Prepetcha language.

Chiwaco lurked in a dark place, watching these soldiers' silent, simple faces and familiar wooden expressions. He did not see the characteristic aggressiveness and bloodlust of the elite Mexica samurai; instead, he felt a kind of kinship and homespun atmosphere.

"Eh, is this a southern accent of the capital city? Does the Alliance have other insiders?"

Puap listened intently and then looked puzzled.

"Old Chi, the road ahead is blocked, what do we do?"

"Let's gamble on it! These people seem reliable!"

Chiwaco bit his teeth hard. He dropped the spear he never parted with and raised the wooden plank in his hand, pulling Puap forward.

"Chief Divine bless, friendlies!"

The shout spread far, and hundreds of Long Spears militia turned to look. A young captain blew a whistle, and the militiamen silently lifted their copper spears, closing in from all sides!

Chapter 480 - Meeting and Presenting Gifts

"Eh? The Alliance's Scout wooden plaque? It's of a higher rank than mine."

The Spear Militia were meticulous, forming a tight formation surrounding the two men with their sharp Copper Spears. The young commander, Guzman, looked perplexed. The two figures in front of him were dressed in Black Robes, bloodstained, and carrying a bamboo basket on their back. He examined the wooden plaque handed to him, scrutinizing it for a while before asking again in Mexico.

"Are you the Kingdom's insiders?"

"We, Alliance's, people!"

Chiwaco blinked his old eyes, repeating in simple Mexica language. Guzman scratched his head, unable to fully understand the other's accent, then turned to his trusted Militia.

"Please call General Ezpan over; there might be urgent intelligence."

One of the Militia promptly stepped out of the formation and headed north. The rest stood firm with their Spears aimed at the two within the encirclement, the spear points pressuring their vitals. Chiwaco and Puap repeated themselves several times, but the captain across from them remained silent, his expression stern. Soon, large beads of sweat seeped from their foreheads.

Not far to the north, Ezpan stood at the end of the street, his armor stained with blood. He clutched the cold Spear in his hand, gazing at everything before him.

The majestic Capital City was collapsing under the night sky, its flames and cries of slaughter scattering with the wind; the flag atop the Palace of Wind silently fell, crashing in front of the blood-stained palace; the top of the House of Wind burst into blue flames, the centuries-old Temple destroyed amid thick smoke; generations of the Great Nobility also fell with wails, becoming cold adornments amidst the opulent Manor...

These images were imprinted in the eyes of the Surrendered General Ezpan, also translating into the tumultuous emotions welling up in his chest. Once invincible Nobility and high Priests now lay as low as dust, crawling at his feet, their lives or deaths at his mere word!

Ezpan's expression shifted. He caressed his severed finger, his heart filled with a mix of exhilaration and disorientation. After a while, he turned around, looking towards the Prince's position, bowing deeply with a long sigh.

"Such is the choice of life!... The God of Destiny is unfathomable, only the avatars of the divines endure in this world!... If not for His Highness, what end would I have met?..."

As Ezpan was reflecting, the reporting Militia came quickly. After a brief exchange of words, the two headed south together. Soon, Ezpan saw the surrounded insiders. He glanced over their tattered Black Robes, noting the faint pattern of the Hummingbird, and his gaze sharpened.

"You are insiders? Samurai of the Hummingbird Family?"

Hearing the familiar accent of the Capital City, Puap's expression finally relaxed. He nodded and cautiously replied.

"We are the insiders who opened South City. There is urgent military intelligence we wish to report to His Highness."

"Meet His Highness? Military intelligence? What intelligence?"

"..." Puap was momentarily at a loss for words. He looked towards the old Militia.

"Chief Divine bless! May I ask who you are?"

The old Militia asked with a respectful smile.

Ezpan first looked at the Scout wooden plaque, then examined Chiwaco's smiling face, and finally glanced at the bamboo basket before he finally spoke.

"I am Ezpan, born in the southern region of Qinchongcan, worked many years as a miner. Now, I am the new Legion Commander of the Tarasco Militia of the Alliance, as well as the interim Adjutant of the Spear Legion!"

"Ah! Legion Commander!"

The old Militia looked bewildered, while Puap exclaimed in surprise.

"In the Mexica Alliance, we, the people of Prepetcha, could actually achieve such a position! To command a legion all by ourselves!"

"Yes. I have followed His Highness for two years, one of the earliest partisans of His Highness!"

Ezpan lifted his head, answering proudly, his heart warming slightly.

After a moment of contemplation, Chiwaco tugged at Puap forcefully, then pointed at his chest.

"Old Pu, take it out! We can trust him!"

The Huitu Samurai hesitated for a moment before pulling out the Jade Talisman from His Highness. Ezpan's pupils instantly contracted. He examined it carefully, his expression turning solemn.

"His Highness's Jade Talisman?!"

Chiwaco nodded, earnestly saying.

"Great Master, we know where the Royal Family's Prince is and would like to report back to His Highness!"

"What? The Prince! Where?!"

A smile squeezed onto Chiwaco's face.

"Great Master, this... we are all people of Prepetcha, bound to serve His Highness in the future. We should look out for each other... Perhaps, you could join us to report to His Highness?"

"Indeed, His Highness personally promised me a Noble title and granted the Jade Talisman as a token... We are all loyal Prepetcha to His Highness..."

"Hm?... People of Prepetcha... His Highness's promise... Looking out for each other..."

The fiery glow illuminated the three faces looking at each other. Miner, farmer, Samurai, three different identities of Tarascans meeting here for the first time. In this era of change and uncertainty, the once ordinary fates of these men were altered by the war of the Mexica Alliance. They had attached themselves to His Highness, embarking on paths they never imagined. Ahead lay bright prospects and unforeseeable futures!

After a while, Ezpan touched his severed finger again. He finally smiled, nodding solemnly.

"Chief Divine bless, it should be so!"

"Chief Divine bless!"

The three prayed with smiles. Chiwaco breathed a sigh of relief, his back drenched with sweat. He earnestly entreated Ezpan.

"Great Master, let's set out now! The city is in chaos and carnage, could you dispatch two squads of Militia to look after our families?"

"Done! Where do you live?"