

## Civilization 631

### Chapter 631 - A Deadly Fight in the Mountains - End (Part 2)

The melee in the mountains was a mess, with the sounds of battle shaking the heavens. Once the warriors were locked in close combat, it became very difficult to command them. Hearing Uman's order, only a hundred or so tribal warriors who had not yet engaged obeyed the command. They quickly split into two groups, circling to both sides of the Otomi army at an angle, then crouched low and charged like hunting dogs!

As the flanks charged, the fighting became even more brutal. The samurai formations on both wings shook for a moment, slightly disorganized. Ottopan Warriors and Guajili fighters grappled with each other, like wild beasts tearing into each other, each delivering deadly attacks. In just a moment, dozens lay fallen!

The red-haired Canine Hunters stood up straight, straining to shoot at the Longbow Warriors, while the archers on the other side quickly returned fire. Arrows crisscrossed the mountain paths, many flying into the woods, startling the eagles into flight.

The seasoned red-haired Hunter Tuohe, his face covered with red markings, had an indifferent expression. He squinted his eyes, holding the Hunting Bow at an angle, and released a sharp Bone Arrow! Forty paces away, a Longbow trusted aide was struck in the face and fell to the ground at the sound.

"The third finger!"

Tuohe nodded slightly, mentally noting the count. Then, he shifted his position slightly, aimed at another trusted aide, drew the string to his cheek, and released another swift arrow.

"The fourth finger!"

Tuohe did not need to see the result of the shot, he confidently counted under his breath. He had wielded the bow for over twenty years; even his back was shaped into an arch suitable for shooting. As soon as an arrow left his hand, he knew by instinct whether it had hit its mark.

"Ah!"

As expected, another trusted aide let out a piercing scream, an arrow through the eye bleeding, they writhed in agony on the ground.

A small smile tugged at the corner of Tuohe's mouth. After this battle, he would be able to draw four quarters into a red stripe on his face, surely surpassing Uman as the first man of the tribe. He moved his Hunting Bow again, aiming for the next enemy, when suddenly a whistling of death reached his ears!

Seven or eight Feathered Arrows came at him simultaneously, targeting the Divine Archer! Tuohe swiftly bent his body and stepped aside, but still, he was pierced by a sharp arrow through his waist and abdomen, bringing him to the ground. Then, another volley of arrows descended, turning him into a bloodied figure in an instant!

The senior Hunter lay on the ground, the earth beneath him rapidly wetting. With his dying strength, he looked up at the autumn woods. Some fall leaves danced in the air before drifting down slowly, stained with blood red.

"Autumn is... the cycle... of death,... returning... to the... earth... mother..."

Tuohe murmured softly, his eyes quickly losing their spark. Surrounding the thick-skinned Jiowar chieftain, warriors from both sides fell like autumn leaves. Of the two thousand elite, a third had already died in the fierce battle, and yet the arriving reinforcements filled the ranks!

Atop a hill, Chieftain Red Fox tightly gripped his weapon, his gaze fixed on the distant battle.

Several hundred elite Red Fox suddenly broke out, hemming in the Otomi chieftain, like the mouth of a snake half-biting its prey. However, the prey had frightfully thick skin and couldn't be bitten through; the snake hesitated to let go. The cruel struggle went on, as the Otomi opened the gates of their camp and each of the Canine Tribes dispatched more warriors. Reinforcements from both sides kept arriving continuously, joining the battle from two sides, stretching the battle line longer and longer, unwittingly heading towards an unexpected decisive battle!

"Chieftain! Divine Archer Tuohe, is dead!"

A trusted aide hurried up the hill to report to Chieftain Red Dog, who was observing the battle.

"What?!"

Chichika clenched his fists, his face fierce like a wild beast choosing its prey. Tuohe had been one of his top archers and to die like this on a nameless mountain trail! Chieftain Red Fox paced back and forth, undecided. He turned his head again, looking toward the battlefield, which had grown to three or four thousand combatants, then at the still solid line of Ottopan trusted aides.

"No, this battle can't be fought like this!"

Chichika bit through his lip, setting his resolve. He had been keen to have a full-scale battle with the Otomi mongrels, but not on this kind of flat terrain with no cover. Chieftain Red Fox shouted to his trusted aide beside him.

"Sound the horn for retreat!"

"Chieftain, a retreat?"

...

"Retreat!"

Chichika roared fiercely.

"Let Uman retreat! Dispatch the remaining two thousand warriors to ambush in the woods! Also, send an envoy to inform the other tribes: if the Otomi people chase into the forest, ensure they never return!"

The trusted aide nodded and left. In just a moment, the deep sound of the horn echoed through the mountains. The Guajili people had hunted massive beasts in the north and were now using real bull horns.

"Woo! Woo!..."

Uman's eyes were bloodshot as he was drawing his bow angrily. The sound of the horn reached him from afar. He turned his head toward the hill where the chieftain stood, but all he saw was the retreat flag. The chieftain's figure had already disappeared.

"What?"

"Woo! Woo!..."

Even in the midst of fierce combat, the elite red-haired warriors still managed to keep their cool. They looked back, hesitated for a few moments, then decisively turned around and retreated.

"Awoo! We're leaving!"

Uman, with an unwilling expression, had no choice but to obey. Before leaving, he took one last look at the Otomi leader, who was close at hand. The enemy was covered in arrows, his shield peppered like a hairy brush, and was now also turning his head toward the hill where the horn was sounding.

"There? The leader of the Guajili?"

Upon hearing this entirely different horn sound, Jiowar's expression changed. He looked toward the nearby hill, squinted his eyes in thought, and then shouted loudly to his trusted aide.

"Wave the command flag, have the nearest camp send out troops! Attack that hill!..."

As he was speaking, the Guajili people suddenly erupted into a wave of chaotic shouts. Then, they turned their heads together, their formation completely scattered, and fled into the woods behind them. The Canine Warriors, mostly light and without armor, accustomed to running, were still swift as they moved through the hills, rapidly escaping. The samurai, with their eyes bloodshot from killing, continued to chase the fleeing enemy, nearly entering the forest!

After watching for a moment and seeing birds take flight above the forest, and faint shadows moving, Jiowar decisively took out his conch horn and blew on it personally.

"Diddy! Diddy! The entire army retreat!"

"Woo woo! Woo woo!"

The leaders of both armies, one after the other, issued orders to retreat. The deep bull horn and the piercing conch horn echoed simultaneously through the mountains like an abruptly ending symphony. The warriors of both sides quickly disengaged and then, collecting their calm, turned back toward their main forces.

A fierce battle had erupted suddenly, with moments of intense fighting, and then just as suddenly, it subsided. Under the admiring gazes of the samurai, Jiowar pulled out the bone arrows from his body, snapped them one by one, and threw them on the ground. Then he lifted his head and gazed into the vast sky.

The sun was setting in the west, staining the mountain peaks with its reddish glow. At both ends of the long mountain path, the two armies were each returning to their camps, reestablishing a standoff across the miles. In this battle, both sides had lost over a thousand lives, nearly all elites! The losses of the two armies were roughly equal, and although the Guajili had achieved the element of surprise, they didn't gain the upper hand in the fight.

Black eagles descended from the sky, swooping down on the fresh food. Between the undulating mountains, it was as if nothing had happened, except that the color of the autumn leaves on the mountain path had turned from yellow to the red of maple leaves.

"Praise the Chief Divine's protection!... Thank you for Your Highness's graciousness!..."

Jiowar grasped the Sun Amulet at his chest, pressed against his sturdy gold armor, and prayed devoutly to the sunset. Soon after, he gritted his teeth and cursed fiercely.

"Despicable Guajili people! When His Highness's grand army arrives, we'll sacrifice you all to the Chief Divine, one by one to the heavens!"

Chapter 632 - Tribal Council

"Go outside the tent and receive five lashes yourself!"

Chichika's expression was fierce as he spoke sternly. He was draped in a wolf robe, sitting cross-legged in the broad main tent, with tribal chiefs seated on both sides. The tribal council was in session, with all chiefs participating in deciding the fate of the Guajili Alliance. The Red Dog Chieftain, wearing a long crown of eagle feathers, sat on an upper buffalo skin rug, a dried great buffalo head behind him.

The North American buffalo is the largest land beast in the northern Wilderness and even across the continent. Standing nearly two meters tall and weighing up to a ton, it's extremely fast, irritable, aggressive, and dangerous. Hunting buffalo is a symbol of valor among the Wilderness tribes. This buffalo was Chichika's prey in his youth, its head personally severed by him to create this specimen. Now, the enormous buffalo head in the main tent not only demonstrated the chief's fearlessness and bravery but also declared his unquestioned leadership position.

Uman tore off his cotton armor from his upper body, bared his chest, and strode out of the tent to receive his punishment. He bit down hard on his teeth, without uttering a sound, letting another trusted aide forcefully whip him. The whip cracked sharply, leaving bloody marks on his flesh. Beads of sweat suddenly burst forth on Uman's forehead. After receiving his punishment, he still bit down hard on his teeth, walked back into the main tent with his back wounded, and knelt down before the chief.

"Uman, do you acknowledge your fault?"

Chichika glanced at the fresh red on the back of his aide, his tone slightly softer.

"I do! ... The recent strike was unfavorable, we lost too many elites... and Tuohe died in battle!"

Uman bit his teeth and answered, looking down.



The major tribes of the Wilderness usually numbered around five thousand, typically having over two thousand men capable of fighting, among them three hundred to four hundred elite red-haired warriors. The harsh living conditions of the Wilderness, with scarce food supplies and drastic climate changes, made it difficult for overly large tribes to form in one place.

The Red Dog Tribe was the largest tribe in the Wilderness, having absorbed others along its journey southwards, now possessing nearly ten thousand members with over four thousand warriors and eight hundred elite red-haired hunters. In today's battle alone, they lost four to five hundred capable tribal warriors and a hundred elite red-haired hunters!

At this thought, Chichika felt a pang in his heart. Losing tribal warriors was one thing, they could be recruited from other tribes. But red-haired hunters, skilled in archery, were not so easily replaced. He clenched the long dagger at his waist, suppressing his murderous impulse, before looking again at Uman.

"Uman, you just said, the Otomi chief on the opposite side, was hit by dozens of arrows but did not fall?"

"Yes, Chief! The last Otomi chief was killed by one of our volleys; he was gone. But this one, after several volleys, is unscathed, his skin thicker than an armadillo!"

Uman nodded with resentment, dissatisfied. He had failed to kill the opposing chief in the raid. Ottopan warriors had thus gained the upper hand, forming a battle array in resistance, resulting in many casualties.

"Thick skin? ... I seem to have heard of it somewhere, like the Cactus Tribe has many thick-skinned warriors. Otuwa once sent an envoy, saying that it is an expensive and robust armor. Just defeat the Cactus Tribe, and we can take the thick skin..."

Chichika tried to recall. The Red Dog Alliance had long been active further north, not often clashing with the Mexica Allied Forces, and was not familiar with the opponent's tactics and equipment. After thinking for a while, the Red Dog Chieftain suddenly slapped his thigh.

"Right! A couple of days ago, a tribe fled from Red Fox Valley, what was it called?"

"Chief, it's the Red Crow Tribe. They also brought a few small tribes with them, all now merged together. I went as an envoy to see them, the tribe had over two thousand members, just over eight hundred warriors, and one to two hundred red-haired. But after all, it's a small tribe, there's even a young girl among the red-haired warriors..."

The trusted aide sneered, seemingly disdainful.

"Over two thousand isn't a small tribe. As for the women of the Wilderness, many are excellent in archery!"

Chichika laughed and did not mind. He continued to ask.

"The Red Crow Tribe, where are they now?"

"They took the farther mountain path to the north, now in Pamus Valley, encamping just outside a small town by the riverside. Hmm, it seems they plan to continue migrating eastward along the Tampen River."

"Go, go now!"

Chichika ordered without hesitation. He needed more intelligence on the Southern Tribes.

"Tell the Red Crow Tribe, they have been conscripted! Ordinary warriors may stay at the camp, but all the red-haired must be sent to fight. Also, have their chieftain come and listen by my side!"

The trusted aide bowed to take the order and then set out east from the camp. The Red Dog Chieftain looked back at Uman.

"Uman, the wolf pack hunts in an instant! In this battle," he sighed, "your ambush failed, yet you clung tenaciously, deserving punishment. However, you charged forward personally like a fearless buffalo, deserving reward. Hmm, just now I gave you five lashes as a punishment, now it's time for your reward. Choose a noble Otomi lady from my rear tent for yourself—I reward you!"

"Ah! As you command, Chieftain! Awoooo..."

Uman's face lit up with joy as he kowtowed.

"Haha, go on then, my wild buffalo!"

Seeing the warrior's submissive demeanor, Chichika nodded in satisfaction and continued discussing military matters with the tribal leaders. Seated in the principal seat, he only needed to give a few brief commands for all the chiefs to nod in agreement. Even the chieftains of the great tribes often showed compliance. This clear distinction in rank and file was wholly different from the three tribes in Red Fox Valley.

"Chieftain Chichika. Scouts report that Red Fox Valley has fallen, not even holding for ten days! As a result, Otuwa fled, Mizili was captured, and Miwa surrendered. A full twenty thousand from the Wilderness Tribes have become mere sacrifices at the mercy of the Aztec people!"

With this, Red Monkey Chieftain Ozoma's eyes flickered. He looked at the worried faces of the other chiefs before turning his gaze upward to Chichika.

"Now, the great army of the Cactus Tribe is charging this way like an unstoppable buffalo. The Cactus Warriors approach ferociously, as deadly as Jaguars. The wolf packs of the wilderness never engage in risky battles; the vast wilderness is enough for us to stay clear of danger... Chichika, should we perhaps step back a bit?"

"No! Ozoma, we must not retreat."

Chichika answered decisively, his gaze intense as he stared straight into Ozoma's eyes, filled with a leader's command.

"Right now, the old camps of all tribes are in the northeast at Pamus Valley, tens of thousands of starving tribesmen are awaiting food. And with the corn soon ripe for harvesting, right on the brink of reaping, how can we leave now?!"

Then, Red Dog Chieftain paused, his face showing a hint of murderous intent.

"The swift falling of Red Fox Valley was due to the Red Fox Tribe leading the escape! Ozoma, do you intend to lead an escape as well?"

Facing the pressing question from Red Dog Chieftain, the heart of Red Monkey Chieftain chilled. He bowed his head, unable to meet his gaze, and stuttered softly.

"Uh, esteemed Chieftain Chichika... naturally, I will act with all the tribes..."

"Good, remember your promise!"

Chichika slapped the bullhide beneath him, producing a loud smack. He swept his fierce gaze over the surrounding chiefs. Some nodded in agreement, others still appeared anxious. The Red Dog Chieftain pondered for a moment before speaking to inspire.

"My fellow chieftains, we have over sixty thousand tribesmen in our hands! Including the robust women skilled in archery, we can gather thirty thousand warriors! And the opposing allied forces are at most twenty to thirty thousand. The numerous Otomi mongrels are no match for us, and the skilled Cactus Warriors number only a few thousand! They still need to leave forces behind to guard their positions and maintain their supply lines. If we hold the strategic passes and raid their supply routes, we can surely defend the valley!"

"Just fifty li northeast of here lies Pamus Valley, blessed by our ancestors, promised to be our home! It stretches fifty li from east to west, and thirty to forty li from north to south; surrounded by mountains on all sides, it is easy to defend but hard to attack! In the middle of the valley flows the broad Tampen River, which runs eastward, irrigating the fertile lands... This is a rare fertile ground in the north, just sow the seeds and you'll reap plenty of food!"

"Having such a rich land, would you still wish to return to the barren wilderness? After living in comfortable stone houses, do you really want to go back to being exposed to the elements? Moreover, even the women from the south are fairer, larger, softer, and won't shoot at you with a bow at the slightest provocation!"

Upon hearing this, the chiefs laughed loudly, spewing vulgarities, all in agreement. Pamus Valley was extraordinarily rich, with no worries about cold spells or water sources, and capable of producing vast amounts of food. The river provided fish, and the mountains were abundant with birds and animals. This was something unimaginable for the tribes descending from the wilderness before.

Seeing the chiefs' expressions, Chichika grinned, easing the murderous look. His direct control over the tribes numbered ten thousand, and his command over the various tribes of the wilderness exceeded sixty thousand. The wilderness had never seen such a large tribal alliance, and only the fertile south could sustain it.

As the leader of tens of thousands from the Guajili people, Red Dog Chieftain had no inherited experience to draw from, nor the support of wilderness traditions. He could only rely on the military strength immediately under him, and the prestige of a chieftain, to govern so many tribes. For the warriors from various tribes, he both rewarded and punished, winning their loyalty; for the ordinary chieftains, he generously bestowed wealth to calm their hearts; and for the chieftains of the great tribes, he not only actively sought their support but also sternly cracked the whip at any dissent. After a busy half-year, he had finally managed to keep the tribes under control.

However, all this was predicated on the fact that he could not afford to lose a battle or retreat. Defeat would diminish his authority and attract challenges from those with ambitions. Once they left the rich

Pamus Valley, without such fertile lands to sustain them, the gathered tribes would disperse as easily as sand scattered in the wind, returning to their fragmented state on the wilderness. Then, this so-called leader of the alliance would exist in name only.

Having tasted power, Red Dog Chieftain was no longer willing to let go. Seeing the wealth and weakness of the southern tribes, he was filled with even greater ambition. In this moment, desire ran through the heart of the wilderness leader like a rampaging herd of beasts. He looked at the crowd once more and bellowed like a wolf.

"Awooo! May the ancestors bless us! My fellow chieftains, we shall hold our ground here and fight the invading enemy! Cut down trees, stack stones, reinforce the encampments in the mountains...Get your bows ready and wait for the Cactus Tribe to come and meet their doom!"

#### Chapter 633 - Royal Banner Arrives

The end of September brought both a golden harvest and a withering intent to kill. Xiulote led his army eastward for eighty or ninety miles and finally arrived at the camp of Jiowar. His gaze swept across the undulating hills along the way, and in the distance, towering mountains rose majestically. The dust of the troops ascended in the winding mountain paths, while the fallen leaves of the sparse trees fluttered amidst the hills.

"The Eastern Madre mountain range truly rises magnificently!"

Throughout the journey, Xiulote felt deeply moved. The Pamus Valley lay to the northeast of the Red Fox Valley, deep within the Eastern Madre Mountains. The distance between the two valleys was about one hundred and seventy miles, all along rugged, winding mountain roads. These paths varied in width and were obstructed by forests, making it extremely difficult for the army to pass through.

"To conquer the Guajili Canine Descendants in the North, I had thought we would duel and pursue them over the flat wilderness, but it turned out to be a laborious trek through the mountains, attacking mountain strongholds!"

Thinking of this, Xiulote shook his head and chuckled ruefully. The Guajili Canine Descendants had no herds; they were a tenacious nomadic hunting people, accustomed to the wilderness and mountains. They moved like the wind, and when encountering a powerful enemy, it was only natural for them to hide in the wilderness and flee for hundreds of miles. But now, besieged by the need for food, they remained in the two valleys, defending from a position of strength.

"Raise the Royal Banner, summon Jiowar over!"

Soon, the Royal Banner of Black Wolf was erected on a hill outside the camp. Xiulote ascended to a higher position, overlooking the terrain around him and surveying the enemy camp. Jiowar, too, was very careful, accompanying the King at his side.

"Jiowar, you've fought a battle against the Red Dog Alliance before, losing a thousand men."

Xiulote looked at the massive Canine camp and then at the dense forests nearby the camp.

"What about the Red Dog Alliance, how formidable are they?"

"Your Highness, the Guajili people are divided into five parts, with the Red Dog Tribe at the forefront, but their combat strength varies,"



Jiowar pondered for a moment before answering frankly.

"The direct lineage of the Red Dog Tribe is quite capable in battle, slightly less strong than my elite troops when lined up in formation, but stronger than the Ottopan Warriors in forest combat. However, they are very cunning, always avoiding head-on battles with the legions."

Then, Jiowar paused, his expression tinged with indignation. He leaned forward, protesting like a domestic dog,

"Your Highness, the Red Dog Alliance has a large number of red-haired Hunters. Their tactics are extremely flexible. They would harass us at night, preventing the Samurai from resting, and even launch night raids. They use tactics of provocation and feigned retreat to lure the legions into the forests and then engage in melee. Half of the thousand men I lost were ambushed and killed in the forest after engaging in fight without orders. They're also extremely despicable, concentrating a large number of Divine Archers to snipe at leaders... Your Highness, please use the Chief Divine's mana to destroy the enemy! If not for the Copper Armor you bestowed upon me, I would have already gone to the Divine Kingdom..."

"Night harassment? Provocation and feigned defeat? Skirmishes in the forest, decapitation tactics? It all seems so familiar..."

Xiulote pondered silently.

"The Red Dog Alliance is like a pack of wolves on the wilderness, leaning more towards offensive combat. Even when both armies face each other, they persistently take the initiative to attack, creating pressure on the opponent. The Canine Descendants' weakness lies in their simple equipment and impulsive nature. They have poor discipline and aren't good at defending."

The King reflected, looking toward the opposite side again. It seemed the Red Dog Tribe had noticed the arrival of reinforcements for the Alliance, and once more they sent out several hundred-man teams of elites to harass the camp with Archery. Among them, three teams headed towards the Black Wolf's Royal Banner through the woods.

"Your Highness, there are also small squads of Canine Descendants hidden in the woods! The enemy is attacking, do you wish to return to the main camp temporarily..."

Bertade observed the birds in the woods for a while and suggested in a grave tone.

"There's no need! A thousand Longbow trusted aides, five hundred Jaguar warriors, all donned in Armor. Why should I hide?"

Xiulote smiled and gave his command loudly.

"Bertade, I give you five hundred Longbow trusted aides, go and meet the Canine Hunters head on!"

The Head Warrior nodded. He personally led the Longbow trusted aides to the front of the hill, forming a loose defensive formation. In just a moment, figures with red hair also formed into loose formation, rushing towards them like the wind.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

From a higher vantage, with a hundred paces between them, the trusted aides began to let fly their arrows. The fierce rain of arrows whistled forth, felling several Hunters. Hundreds of Canine Hunters all crouched low, using the cover of the trees and hills, surrounding from all directions like a pack of wolves on the hunt in the wilderness. In no time, the two sides had closed to within fifty paces of each other and began to exchange fire.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

The Canine Hunters suddenly stood upright and fired their arrows furiously at the trusted aides. The precise Bone Arrows flew toward their targets, aiming for the vital spots on the chest, but were blocked by the Copper Armor, making a clanging metallic noise upon impact. The trusted aides did not dodge; squinting their eyes, they shot their arrows steadily. Soon, six to seventy bodies of Canine Warriors lay at the foot of the hill.

"Awoo!"

The Canine Warriors lurking in the forest finally arrived. Two hundred Canine Warriors burst out of the nearest woodland, charging toward the fluttering Black Wolf Banner. Xiulote's expression remained unchanged as he waved the command banner.

"Roar!"

Two hundred Jaguar Warriors let out tiger roars. Clad in Copper Armor and holding shields, they suddenly lunged forward a few steps and hurled their Javelins! The heavy Javelins tore through the air, instantly piercing through the charging Canine Warriors, who fell screaming with wounds that could not

be treated. A hit from a Javelin meant certain death. Then, the Jaguar Warriors pulled out their War Clubs and began to kill indiscriminately.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

The rain of arrows soared back and forth while the Canine Hunters were completely scattered, pinned down by the trusted aides, unable to raise their heads. Their arrows stuck into the thick hides of the enemy, hitting vital spots, but their opponents were unscathed. A single arrow from the trusted aides could penetrate the Hunters' Cotton Armor and leave them seriously wounded or dead.

"Captain Uman, we can't fight this! The other side has thick hides; we should retreat!"

Amoxtli, hunched down, hiding behind a rock, whispered to the Red Dog Captain.

"Shooting like this is pointless! In the Red Fox Valley, we fought with the Cactus Warriors many times! To take down one with such thick hide, it takes five or six warriors attacking at the same time. They also wear helmets; if you want to shoot them, you must hit the lower leg or the throat!"

"Dammit! Don't compare the cowards of the Red Fox Valley with the warriors of our Red Dog Tribe!"

Uman cursed out loud. Doubting such beliefs, he again peeked out and aimed at the leading Samurai, releasing an arrow straight for the throat!

The dangerous sound of the arrow splitting the air preceded his reaction. Bertade ducked slightly and sidestepped, and the arrow grazed past his helmet, dragging out a grating metallic screech. Then, the Head Warrior turned sharply, fixing Uman with a piercing stare and drew his Longbow.

"Swoosh!"

Amoxkli yanked Uman back forcefully, pulling him behind the boulder. A sharp Copper Arrow grazed their red hair, "thunking" into the soil, burying two inches deep!

"Ah!"

Uman's face turned pale, and his body trembled. He managed to get up from the ground and was about to shoot back.

"Captain Uman! The warriors ambushing us have been routed by the Tiger-heads! We stand no chance at a sneak attack now; let's retreat quickly!"

Amoxkli held Uman down again, strenuously advising him. Uman was a personal guard to the Chieftain Chichika of the Red Dog Tribe and a warrior who couldn't afford to fall here!

Over the past two days, Amoxkli had been forcibly conscripted by the Chieftain of the Red Dog Tribe into the camp to serve as his retinue. The Red Dog Chieftain frequently asked him for information about the Southern Tribes. He replied faithfully, while quietly learning the Chieftain's methods of disciplining the tribe. Today, the Black Wolf's banner approached from the western mountain pass. He advised the Chieftain that the God of Death Great Chief was near and that they should retreat quickly; the Red Dog

Chieftain was noncommittal. Uman suggested a proactive sneak attack, which Chichika approved with a nod, further tasking Amoxтли, who was familiar with the Cactus Tribe, to strike alongside.

"The God of Death Great Chief's Mana is boundless, with countless thick hides at his side; how could he be so easily ambushed?"

Amoxтли lamented in his heart.

"This battle"

#### Chapter 634 - Vanguard Attacks the Camp

"Roar!"

The Jaguar warriors let out an intimidating roar. Cloaked in heavy armor, they swung their Obsidian Clubs with ease, knocking down the Canine warriors and slicing them into different shapes. The thick scent of blood dispersed in the wind, while the Canine warriors' screams of agony continued ceaselessly.

The brutal close combat lasted but a moment before over eighty Canine warriors had fallen. They were unable to penetrate the heavy armor, and their combat skills were no match for their opponents, causing hardly any effective damage. The one-sided slaughter greatly demoralized them, and stray Canine warriors began to flee. Seeing this, the leading Canine warrior finally let out a wolf howl in despair, calling out,

"Aooo! Retreat!"

The surviving Canine warriors turned and fled, hurrying into the forest. The Jaguar warriors pursued the fleeing enemy, killing over twenty more until they reached the deep woods. Then, the sound of a trumpet halted them from beneath the Royal Banner, and the Messenger Officer waved the command flag toward the battle formation to their front-right. The battle group of two hundred nobles turned once again, heading toward the Canine hunters at the vanguard.

"Uman!"

Amoxтли growled again, almost pressing his mouth against Uman's ear.

"Thick-skinned Tigers are coming up! It's too late to run now!"

"Cactus Tribe's Tiger warriors?"

Uman's eyes were bloodshot as he intensely watched the small strides of the approaching Jaguar warriors. These warriors moved with steady steps and agile actions, their battle techniques polished and refined, treating the slaughter indifferently. They were dressed in thick Cotton Armor, with vibrant leopard skins draped on their backs, and beast-shaped heavy helmets on their heads, making them appear like ferocious beasts.

"Aooo! I'll shoot you dead!"

Uman suddenly popped his head out and shot an arrow at one of the Jaguar warriors. The Bone Arrow streaked swiftly through the air, hitting the target's shoulder from fifty paces away. The Jaguar warrior merely shook slightly, then let out a tiger roar and charged towards him.

"Damn it! All thick-skinned... Ah!"

Uman cried out in pain, dropped his longbow, and staggered back behind a large rock. A flash of an arrow whizzed past his cheek, striking his left arm harshly as he aimed his bow.

Amoxtli cautiously peeked out, only to see the leading Longbow warrior looking calm, his gaze sharp as a hawk's, as he took another Copper Arrow in hand. He then checked Uman's wound, noticing the arrowhead had penetrated deep into the flesh through the cotton armor, nearly an inch deep.

"I'm... fine... Shoot them dead!"

Uman was drenched in sweat from the pain, yet his eyes still glowered fiercely.

"Crack!"

Amoxtli forcefully snapped the exposed part of the arrow shaft. He took out a speckled mushroom from his pocket and stuffed it into Uman's mouth.

"Swallow it, for the pain!"



Uman hesitated slightly but recognized it as the medium used for communicating with the spirits, the tribe priest's hallucinogenic mushroom. He chewed and swallowed the mushroom, and within moments, his gaze became vacant and his mind chaotic, yet his body filled with strength.

"Uman, it's time to retreat!"

"Eh?... Okay!"

Amoxтли asked briefly, hesitating no longer. He shouted to the red-haired hunters nearby.

"Covering fire! All shoot at the leading warrior! I'll lead Captain Uman out first; you cover our retreat!"

The group of red-haired hunters exchanged looks, silently nodding their heads. They rose together and fired at the leading Cactus warrior.

Amoxтли, keeping a firm grip on Uman's arm and lowering his body, led him toward the nearest woods. Soon, behind them, a large group of Jaguar warriors charged like tigers and leopards. The harsh cries of battle quickly turned into the woeful screams of the dying.

In the deep mountain forest, Amoxтли looked back. The Canine Hunters in the front lines were also scattering, fleeing in all directions. This risky ambush had left behind more than two hundred elite corpses, yet it had been in vain. The disparity between the strengths of the two sides was enormous, and the losses of the God of Death Great Chief's trusted aides were few. Under the Black Wolf's royal

banner, a king clad in platinum armor was being guarded by the crowd, looking into the distance towards the mountain forest.

"Is this... the Great Chief himself?"

Amoxtli watched for a while but couldn't make out anything clearly. He then looked at the Black Wolf's emblem on the royal banner and a sense of familiarity surged in his heart. He paused for a moment, then suddenly realized.

"Yes! This totem has been consecrated with fresh blood by the Cactus Tribe and possesses mana, staring at it too long will disturb one's mind and spirit!"

With that thought, Amoxtli shuddered, his sense of foreboding growing once again. He dared not look at the banner anymore and immediately pulled Uman to continue their escape to the camp in the mountain pass.

"Uman, let's go!"

"Uh?... Okay!..."

Under the Black Wolf's banner, Xiulote watched the fleeing soldiers disappear into the forest. He gazed at the shadowy mountain forest and after a brief thought, he gave a loud order.

"Avoid the forest. Blow the conch, retreat!..."

The following two days were a peaceful standoff. The Canine Descendants holed up in their camp, fortifying their wooden fortress day and night, while the Mexica allied forces made camp to rest.

The camp in the mountains grew increasingly large, filled with warriors in armor everywhere. Scouts from both sides continuously clashed in the mountain forests on either side, staining the deep autumn woods red. Reinforcements kept arriving, with three regiments reuniting once more. Seven thousand Ottopan Warriors, four thousand Guamare Warriors, five thousand Imperial Guard Legionnaires, and three thousand Red Frog Warriors, nearly twenty thousand soldiers amassed here!

The army stretched for miles, various banners fluttering, stuffing the narrow mountain path to the brim. The last two thousand Pamus Warriors and two thousand Longbow Militia were still more than twenty miles away. They had just finished their rest and were en route.

The royal banner was erected, and Xiulote once again climbed the hill to oversee the battle. The army had rested for two days, and it was time to test the mettle of the Canine Descendants. He personally waved the command banner, and the thunderous beats of the war drums echoed through the valley. Though the mountain path here was not too narrow, its width was still limited. Thousands of allied soldiers successively left the camp to form battle lines, while the remaining warriors waited in the camp.

"Chalki Great Chieftain."

The king, with the army in his hands, was spirited and full of fighting intent.

"The Guamare Warriors have been conserving their strength all this way, they can be our vanguard!"

The middle-aged Chieftain Chalki hesitated slightly. Then, meeting the king's gaze, a chill ran through him, and he boldly shouted.

"The Guamare Warriors have been waiting for the great battle and are desperately hungry for it! Great Chief, I will have my eldest son lead the troops and attack the enemy camp for you!"

"Good! Grant armor! For the general leading the charge!"

A trusted aide immediately stepped forward, handing a set of bronze-faced medium armor to Chalki. The middle-aged chieftain touched the sturdy copper armor emotionally, then reluctantly said to the warriors beside him.

"Give it to my eldest son! Let him fight valiantly for His Highness!"

"Thud thud thud!"

The intense war drums suddenly accelerated. Two thousand Guamare Warriors raised their shields and grasped their war clubs, forming a dense charging formation. Opposite them was the nearest mountain encampment of the Guajili people.

The camp occupied a slightly elevated position, located on a small hill about several meters high, surrounded by a fence tall enough to reach a person's height. More than a thousand Guajili warriors

were defending behind the fence, holding hunting bows and long spears. A Red Deer banner fluttered inside the camp.

"Roar, roar, charge!"

The young warrior clad in copper armor led the charge, fiercely roaring and leading two thousand warriors towards the camp!

Chapter 635 - Vanguard Attacks the Camp II

"Swoosh swoosh swoosh!"

Two thousand Guamare samurai ascended a small hillock and charged within fifty steps of the Red Deer camp, only for the Canine Descendants' hunters' bone arrows to fall like a sudden rain. Over a dozen samurai were struck in the head and face, their screams echoing as they tumbled down the hillock, leaving a trail of blood behind them.

"Rear army, suppress with your shooting! Vanguard, follow me in the charge!"

Chalki's eldest son Quino, clad in copper armor, puffed out his cheeks and bellowed loudly. The officers of various squads were prepared and followed orders. The samurai's formation quickly dispersed, dividing into a front and rear section.

The rear army, consisting of five hundred samurai, drew their bows and fired rapidly at the palisade, suppressing the hunters inside. The howling arrow rain shot past the fences, and a dozen Canine Descendants' strong men wailed as they were hit, their incoming volley weakening.

The vanguard of fifteen hundred samurai took the opportunity to quicken their pace and reached the palisade wall. Five hundred vanguard clad in cotton armor scaled the wall and roared as they engaged the Canine Descendants behind it. Samurai grouped in threes and fives, wielding war clubs, cutting through the enemy's chest and neck; Canine Descendants gathered in turns, thrusting out stone spears, piercing their opponents' waists and bellies. Weapons penetrated flesh, with blood and viscera flowing out along the wounds, the pungent smell of blood quickly spreading.

Now and then, a red-haired hunter would release a stealthy arrow, hitting vital spots and bringing down the climbing samurai. At times, groups of samurai archers fired in volleys, turning the red-haired hunters into porcupines. Most warriors of both sides wore light or no armor, fighting around the rudimentary palisade, and in moments there were a hundred dead on each side! Mute bodies turned into silent corpses, overlapping on both sides of the palisade wall, as samurai continued to trample over them, climbing and fighting. The battle to seize the camp had just begun, and already it reached a climax!

Arrows crisscrossed like rain, ferrying away the lives of warriors. Quino, repressing his killing intent, raised his shield to protect his head and neck, patiently waiting near the camp gate. Under the cover of the great shield, a dozen samurai took out bronze axes and hacked at the camp gate, damaging its structure. Then, an experienced samurai took out a rope, tied it to a support pillar of the camp gate, and a group of samurai let out a loud shout, yanking the rope together!

"Crack... Boom!"

The simple camp gate could no longer hold and collapsed with a crash, tearing open a half gap. Quino let out a battle cry and led dozens of his trusted aides directly into the camp.

The Canine Warriors at the camp entrance fought to the death, stabbing repeatedly at Quino's armor without being able to breach his defense. Then, the ferocious war clubs descended, one by one cutting them down!

"Roar, truly a treasured armor!"

Quino shouted with excitement, tossing aside his shield. He held the club with both hands, foregoing defense, and charged fiercely forward, knocking down the obstructing Canine Warriors! Leading the charge like an arrowhead, dozens of trusted aides pushed forward, creating a breach in the camp. Guamare samurai then continuously poured in through the gap, relentlessly driving back the Guajili Canine Descendants. From a distance, gray-blue figures flowed like a tide, surging up from the base of the hillock, engulfing the simple camp!

"Truly fearless warriors!"

Xiulote smiled, praising Chalki.

"Guamare samurai have been conserving their strength, and their attack today is indeed fierce and valiant!"

"Haha, Your Highness, it is all thanks to the Chief Divine's protection!"

Chalki bowed in a salute, then smiled with self-praise.

"Your Highness, my Guamare samurai roam the wilderness, their bravery is not inferior to that of the Canine Descendants, and their tactics are far superior!"

Xiulote nodded in agreement. He shifted his gaze towards the two thousand Guamare samurai who had yet to launch their attack. He saw many samurais' faces painted with stripes akin to those of the Canine Descendants, but mainly in blue. On their exposed shoulders and arms were also etched blue tattoos of eagles, wolves, bears, and leopards.

"Guamare samurai, they really closely resemble the Canine Descendants..."

The King mused silently. The western territory of the Guamare State was vast, the climate arid, the land barren, and the population sparse.

On the west side of the state lived the Guamal people, to the north the Guajili; various groups mixed and fused with one another. Among the warriors of the Guamare State, it was clear there were many conscripted Guamal Canine Descendants, even Guajili Canine Descendants,

"Chalki, with the various groups mixed in the Guamare State and customs alike, how do you distinguish between the kindred Otomi Tribes?"

Xiulote asked with a smile.

"Distinguish kindred tribes?"

Chalki scratched his head. It took him a while to understand the King's question. The middle-aged chieftain's expression grew subtle as he replied awkwardly.



"Uh... worshiping the ancestral gods, those who form marital alliances with us... they are our own people. Our military campaign this time...was initially in response to the call of the ancestral land priests...of course, now it is to fight to the death for His Highness!"

"Mm. Praise be to the Supreme God and Chief Divine! And praise be to the ancestral gods as Subordinate Gods!"

Xiulote nodded solemnly and prayed a sentence.

"Praise the spirits! Chief Divine supreme! Ancestral gods second supreme!"

Chalki also hastily echoed.

Xiulote smiled without speaking, only contemplating in his heart.

"The faith in the ancestral gods has been passed down for a thousand years and is an important bond among the tribes of the Northern Land; it cannot be easily discarded. And spreading the teachings of the Chief Divine is of urgent importance! Bloodline and faith are the foundation of ruling the Northern Land. The former requires immigration and intermarriage, the latter requires priests to spread the word. Besides this, we must also improve agricultural production and introduce trade methods..."

"Roar! The flag has fallen!..."

The King was contemplating when suddenly he heard a tumultuous cheer, boiling over and coming from the front. He looked up and saw that a grey-blue tide of people had already submerged the camp's center. Quino, clad in copper armor, was forceful breaking the Red Deer's flagstaff, brandishing it triumphantly for a couple of swings, and then flung it to the ground!

Within the Red Deer camp, fifteen hundred Guamare samurai shouted in unison, their morale soaring. Nearly a thousand Guajili warriors let out a chaotic cry and then, led by the Red Deer Chieftain wrapped in a wolf robe, they fled en masse through the back gate.

"Your Highness, protected by the Chief Divine, Quino has taken the camp!"

Chalki's face was full of joy.

"Good!"

The King nodded in satisfaction and promised generously.

"When he returns, I have a great reward for him!"

The two talked and laughed loudly, both holding the winning ticket. In just a quarter-hour, two thousand Guamare samurai had taken the camp and routed more than a thousand warriors of the Red Deer Tribe.

"Haha, the Guajili are nothing special!"

Quino laughed heartily, filled with pride. Drenched in blood, he looked towards the fleeing enemy, his face full of killing intent.

"A thousand samurai, follow me and pursue!"

Having said this, he did not stop moving, leading his trusted aides out from behind, continuing the slaughter towards the fleeing enemy.

The Guajili camp was built against the mountain, with the front and back mutually supporting each other, and the sides merging with the forest. Not far from the back camp, the dense forest stood on both sides, with birds circling in the sky. Half a mile directly behind, there was another camp, where a flag of the Red Monkey fluttered.

The Red Deer Tribe fled swiftly, nearly a thousand warriors scattering in disorder, even blocking the mountain paths. The Red Deer Chieftain, clad in his conspicuous wolf robe, paused for a moment. He looked back and, panic-stricken, headed straight for the deep forest on the north side.

"Where do you think you're running!"

Quino, with eyes red, focused on the location of the Red Deer Chieftain, roaring as he relentlessly pursued. The Red Deer Chieftain, followed by dozens with red hair, vanished into the grim forest. Quino, without hesitation, also led three hundred samurai, charging into the quiet darkness.

"Quick, blow the retreat conch!"

"No good! Call him back!"

Seeing the situation from afar, Xiulote and Chalki exchanged glances, both urgently shouting!

Chapter 636 - Vanguard Attacks the Camp III

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The autumn was in full swing, the sky high and the clouds cold. Shadows flickered in the mountain forests, withered leaves scattered in the breeze, and the earth was filled with a murderous aura.

Quino pursued his prey tirelessly, running like a hunting dog, straight into the depths of the woods. Along the way, three hundred Guamare samurai slaughtered the scattering Red Deer Tribe, gradually spreading out until only two hundred remained closely following behind. After a long chase, he finally saw the Red Deer chieftain's footsteps falter. From more than a hundred steps away, the chieftain suddenly turned, gazing coldly back at him.

"Haha! The damned Red Deer savage finally can't run anymore!"

Quino was overjoyed. His war armor was quite heavy, and he panted heavily from the continuous running. Now, seeing the prey right before his eyes, the valiant samurai summoned his remaining strength and charged with his war club raised high.

"Samurai, follow me and kill!"

"Aoow! Devour them! Aoow..."

With a war club in hand, the Red Deer chieftain pointed at Quino and shouted fiercely. A ghastly wolf howl then rose from the depths of the forest!

Quino was shocked, his war club pausing in his hand. Slowing his charge, he looked around and sweat began to break out on his back. From the secluded woods around him, five to six hundred Canine Descendants' ambushers surged forth. They howled fiercely, lunging like a pack of wolves, at least two hundred with red hair! Despite the dense trees, these warriors moved at great speed. In just a few dozen breaths, dodging between dense foliage, Canine Descendants wielding stone hammers and long spears charged ferociously, ramming straight into the samurai's formation!

Over five hundred howling Canine Warriors fought fervently against nearly two hundred Guamare samurai, entangling viciously and falling like dry branches. The heavy stone hammers crushed skulls with an audible snap of breaking bones; the sharp war clubs slashed through chests and necks, with blood spouting like fountains; now and then, stealthy bone arrows struck eye sockets, eliciting agonizing screams like those of a night owl!

"Haha, foolish Otomi dogs! The forest is our domain, let's see how you escape!"

The Red Monkey chieftain, Ozoma, laughed out loud. He had first hidden deep within the forest, directing the Canine Warriors to surround the enemy, then he ordered the red-haired Hunters to draw close and shoot their arrows, and finally dispatched two troops of warriors to block the approaching enemy samurai. After completing all of this, he cautiously emerged from behind the trees, guarded by dozens of long spears of the guard unit.

"Masate, you useless dull deer, once again I must come to your rescue!"

In the Nava language, Masate means a running wild animal, referring to the deer at this moment and, later on, also taking on the meaning of a horse. In the twenty-day calendar, Masate is the seventh day, symbolizing the alertness of wild animals.

"Hmph! Ozoma, I grew up in the mountains and am a red-haired Hunter of the forest! Had I not been luring the enemy, if I truly had fled with all my might, no one could have caught up to me!"

Masate, the Red Deer chieftain, leaned against a tree, panting slightly, his words sparing no one's feelings.

"And you, why have you only just arrived now!"

"Ha, you still have the nerve to speak? We agreed you would hold out for at least half an hour, but look how long you lasted!"

Ozoma curled his lips. He scanned the situation in the forest, his gaze settling on the fiercely fighting Quino. Then, a piercing conch horn sounded in the distance, and the Red Monkey Chieftain listened intently with a smile spreading across his face.

"Haha, that's the Mexica retreat signal, but it's already too late!"

Masate was momentarily speechless. He turned to summon his trusted aides, then looked at Ozoma.

"Ozoma, the Southern Tribe is ferocious, every man armored! I had hidden two hundred red-haired fighters in the forest, and yet they were routed in a single charge... Hmph! If it were you, you wouldn't have held out any longer yourself!"

"Haha, I understand, I understand! In the end, you still care about your own warriors. Which real-hearted leader would be willing to throw his elite here?"

The Red Monkey Chieftain's eyes were spirited, and he flashed a grin. Then, he patted the shoulder of the Red Deer Chieftain and pointed towards the frontline battle formation.

"That leading dog, how can he fight so fiercely? I've seen him taking so many spears and still hopping around. Could it be, this is the thick skin the scouts spoke of? I wonder what kind of armor he's wearing..."

Masate followed the gesture and fire flashed in his eyes.

"Damn! It's this guy, who broke my tribe's banner and has been yapping after me like a hunting dog... Watch me shoot him dead!"

The Red Deer Chieftain turned and shouted to his aides.

"Bring me my Greatbow!"

"Masate, the warriors are mixed in close combat, using the Greatbow can easily cause friendly fire!"

Ozoma shook his head. He looked ahead, the forest floor littered with bodies. Under the attack of several hundred Canine Warriors, two hundred Guamare samurai had already suffered heavy losses. The remaining seventy or so were divided by the trees, grouped in small numbers and on the verge of collapse under the Canine onslaught.

Not far off, Quino led a small group of twenty trusted aides, forming a small shield formation, desperately holding their ground. His aides were all peppered with arrows, with only Quino still fighting fiercely. And at the edge of the forest expanse, hundreds of Guamare samurai were trying to break through the blockades, desperate to fight their way forward.

"We need to finish this quickly! Hmm, guard unit forward, use the long spears to target the warriors' legs! Right, Zucata, remember to spare that warrior's life!"

Guard unit leader Zucata bowed in acknowledgment. He spoke with a hushed voice, but his accent differed from the Canine Descendants, clearly of a Southern dialect. Quickly, over thirty guards of the Chieftain formed a dense formation, each holding the long spears rarely seen among Canine Descendants. Under Zucata's command, the spear formation advanced quickly, nearing the struggling Quino. The Red Monkey warriors along the way made way for them obediently.

Masate watched from the corner of his eye and caught sight of the gleaming spear tips overlapping in succession, much like a prickly hedgehog. With a flash of doubt, he asked quietly.



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"Is this... a sharp spear from the south?"

"Haha, these are Tarasco copper spears!"

Ozoma smiled, waved his hand, and motioned for Masate to keep looking down.

The guard captain roared, and the Chieftain guard thrust their copper spears simultaneously, aiming for the vanguard, Quino! Sharp copper tips crisscrossed from all directions, absolutely unavoidable.

Quino immediately felt a pain in his flank, but with his copper armor protection, he was not pierced. He roared in fury, swinging his war club with all his might, barely managing to fend off a few attacks.

Zucata's expression was wooden, but he agilely thrust with his copper spear, hitting Quino's calf. The valiant Samurai felt a sharp pain and his knees buckled, unable to support him any longer and he fell to the ground. Afterward, Zucata swung his spear and struck Quino on the back of the head with a thump, and the valiant Samurai blacked out, unconscious.

"Spare him, continue killing!"

The spear formation of the guards passed over the fallen Quino, and continued their alternating thrusts, stabbing down the surrounding warriors! In less than a quarter of an hour, the fighting in the depths of the forest came to a stop, with over two hundred Guamare warriors lying dead in an area, entangled with the bodies of over a hundred Canine Descendants.

"Awooo! Woo!"

As the last enemy fell in the forest, hundreds of Canine Warriors howled and danced, emitting cries like a pack of wolves. Then, like carrion birds, they pounced onto the bodies of the warriors, searching for any useful objects. The Canine people looted everything of use and even finished off the wounded from both sides. In the wilderness of the Tribes, medicine was scarce and life was cheap. Delivering the badly injured warriors from their suffering was a traditional practice and did not affect morale.

The rich scent of blood wafted through the forest, and the cries of agony quickly dissipated. The Canine people eagerly donned the enemy's cotton armor and picked up the warriors' war clubs. From the forest at the edge of the mountains, the sounds of battle grew even more intense.

Ozoma looked in the direction of the noise, where hundreds of Tribal Warriors had taken refuge among the trees, combating the advancing Guamare warriors. He turned his head, his expression solemn.

"Masate, Otomi's reinforcement dogs are coming up. Should we retreat to our camp now, or fight a bit more?"

"Don't rush, let's fight in the forest a bit longer! The terrain here is favorable for us. Having lost the camp, we must kill more enemies to answer to the Chichika leader. Moreover, these enemies are all elite with good equipment! Once the warriors have stripped them of their cotton armor, we'll leave!"

The Red Deer Chieftain pondered briefly before making a decision. The Tribal Warriors continued to fight and die for their chieftains, shedding blood in the mountain forest. Then, he looked eagerly at the Red Monkey Chieftain.

"Ozoma, your group of Chieftain guards wielding those cumbersome long spears, their power is so great! How were they trained?"

"Haha, Masate, are you eyeing my guard?"

Ozoma waved his hand, shaking his head and laughing.

"Well, this is not our wilderness battle technique, and it might not be suited for combat in the wilderness..."

"Ozoma, I of course know this isn't a wilderness battle technique! I'm asking, how were they trained?"

Masate's eyes widened, and he brandished the war club in his hand with a formidable air. Ozoma immediately took two steps back and waved him over.

"Zucata, hurry up and come over here, stand by my side!"

Zucata had already tied up Quino. Dragging the unconscious warrior with one hand and holding the stripped copper armor with the other, he strode to his chieftain's side.

"For you, Chieftain! This one is a noble prisoner from the Otomi! And this should be a bronze Cloth Armor from the Mexica!"

"Good! Zucata, my valiant club!"

In the Prepetcha language, 'Zucata' means a club or a branch. Ozoma praised him once and took the heavy Cloth Armor with both hands. Then, without changing his expression, he gestured casually.

"Send two people to take the prisoner back to the rear camp."

"Yes, Chieftain."

"Ah! Is this the thick hide of the Cactus Tribe, impervious to both arrows and spears when worn?"

A fervent gleam shone in Masate's eyes. He reached out, snatched the Cloth Armor, and greedily stroked it up and down. Beneath the thick and soft layers of cloth was a set of unusually sturdy bronze plates.

"It's so sturdy, like a turtle's shell!... Right, you just said, what's it called, bronze Cloth Armor? What is bronze?"

Upon hearing the question, Zucata was taken aback. He looked to the Red Monkey Chieftain, Ozoma. Ozoma smiled and gesticulated.

"Masate, I can tell you the secret of the southern people. But this armor, this thick hide, is mine!"

"Damn! Cunning monkey, that's impossible!"

Masate cursed aloud. He looked back at his followers, and the thought of the hundreds of casualties pained his heart.

"Ozoma, this is what I got in exchange for the lives of five hundred warriors, and my personal efforts to lure the enemy! Even if the Chichika leader were to demand it in person, I wouldn't give it up!"

As he spoke, the Red Deer Chieftain swung his war club, bringing a whoosh of wind. Ozoma promptly took another two steps back, cursing under his breath.

"Stingy deer, I knew I shouldn't have come to your rescue! What is a piece of bronze Cloth Armor worth? Did you know, the powerful Kingdom to the south has thousands of these armors!"

"Ah? Thousands of thick hides?"

The Red Deer Chieftain looked shocked and incredulous.

"Ozoma, are you bluffing me?"

"Bluffing you? I'm actually understating it. You have no idea about the strength of the southern Kingdom!"

Ozoma shook his head.

"Do you know about the Cactus Tribe's campaign to the west? The Divine Eagle Tribe and the Cactus Tribe both invoked their divine spirits, mobilizing a hundred thousand warriors! They fought over a vast terrain extending five hundred li north to south, from the Lerma River to the farther south Tarsas River, both rivers turned to red with blood!"

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"Please invoke the spirits, a hundred thousand warriors?!"

Masate exclaimed in shock. He was stunned for a moment, then suddenly laughed.

"Ozoma, you're definitely bluffing me! I don't know where you heard such nonsense."

"It's not nonsense, it's my personal experience. The Cactus Tribe really does have a hundred thousand warriors, capable of invoking the War God who can unleash thunderbolts."

Zucata hung his head in silence, and it took him a while to finally say this much.

Hearing this, the Red Deer Chieftain looked doubtful.

"You? Personal experience?"

The Red Monkey Chieftain said with a calm smile.

"He's from the Divine Eagle Tribe. The small phalanx with long spears, he's the one who helped me train them!"

There was a moment of silence in the woodland. Masate pondered without saying a word, Ozoma's eyes flickered, Zucata continued to stand stiff as a stick, and only the clashing at the edge of the forest continued.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

A barrage of arrows flew out from the woods, felling dozens of charging Guamare samurai. Hundreds of samurai braved the rain of arrows, rushing into the woods, trying to save Quino trapped deep within. They fought hand-to-hand with thousands of Canine Descendants from two tribes, then entwined in death together.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Soon, the archers from the rear finally caught up, shooting desperately into the woods. Further away, one could see hundreds of Jaguar warriors. Clad in white-golden armor, holding patterned shields, and gripping sharp war clubs, they formed a well-ordered battle formation. They appeared indifferent and bloodthirsty like restrained beasts, quickly advancing from the camp.

"Chieftain, the Jaguar warriors of the Mexica are coming! They are more elite than the Red Dog Hunters, excel in close combat, are familiar with the terrain of the forest, and now they are all clad in copper armor... With so few men, it's definitely impossible to resist! We can't stay in the woods, it's time to leave."

Upon seeing the signature tiger heads, Zucata's pupils contracted violently, as terrible memories surged to his mind. He hung his head and hastily suggested.

"Thick-skinned tiger heads!..."

Ozoma's expression changed drastically. He took two steps forward and grabbed Masate's arm.

"Quick, gather the tribal warriors! Retreat to my camp together!"

"Ozoma, the woodland is our territory! Even if the enemy is more elite, what's there to fear in the woods?"

Masate objected loudly.



"Praise the Chief Divine! Roar, roar!..."

The tiger roars of the Jaguar warriors became clearly audible, a sign that they were about to attack.

"Enough talk! Gather the warriors! Retreat!"

Ozoma's expression was stern. He took out a short bullhorn and blew a hurried, blaring sound. In the Red Monkey Tribe, a long horn call signified attack, a short horn call meant retreat. The Red Monkey warriors heard the brief horn sound, paused in their movements, and then swiftly turned and fled.

"Damn it!"

Masate protested with a curse. He also took out a Red Deer bone horn and blew a mournful call. Red Deer warriors hurriedly dropped their enemies and quickly fled into the woods. With no one left to obstruct them, the phalanx of Guamare samurai charged in, but they could not move quickly through the forest. Both chieftains immediately turned and, under the escort of their guard, quickly fled toward the Red Monkey camp to the East.

"Ozoma, tonight I'm going to lead the redheads on a night raid, trying to recapture the camp! We must let the warriors of the Cactus Tribe know our mettle!"

While fleeing, Masate still had the energy to speak.

"Huff... Masate, don't waste the lives of your warriors! Your camp is too far forward, and the terrain is not formidable enough, it's indefensible. In my view, we should abandon it and join me in defense!"

"Hmph! Ozoma, your camp isn't exactly impregnable either. According to what you're saying, if the warriors of the Cactus continue their assault, it'll be just as indefensible!"

"Huff... Then we abandon the camp, fight a battle in the woods, then retreat further back!... Huff... Don't run so fast!"

Ozoma followed Masate, running through the rough mountain forest, swiftly leaping over tree roots and rocks. Soon, he gasped out loud. The front-running Masate slowed his pace, stretched out his hand mockingly to lend Ozoma support, and the Red Monkey Chieftain was finally able to relax a bit.

"Masate, there are plenty of camps behind us! Behind us is the Red Deer camp, behind the Red Deer is the main camp of Red Dog, the most defensible and capable of holding out for a long time. And behind the main camp of Red Dog, there is the camp of Red Salamander. Huff... Further back, the Chichika leader has mobilized many tribespeople and continues to build camps. The mountain passages behind, they stretch for a good seventy or eighty li! As long as we occupy and defend the key points, even if the Mexica are fierce, we can hold them off for half a month to a month!"

"Ah? Just half a month to a month?"

Masate's expression changed upon hearing this.

"You mean, hold them off until all the corn has been harvested?... But, the chief of Chichika demanded..."

"Huff... Exactly, don't be fooled by Chichika! Chichika has been dazzled by the rich lands to the south, has burned foolish with the heat of power, he's forgotten he's a wolf on the wilderness. Ha! He has no idea how powerful the Mexica Alliance is! He still thinks he's the fierce Jaguar of the jungle, or even the unbeatable Black Bear of the mountains!"

Ozoma's eyes twinkled as he scoffed.

"Masate, as I see it, if it's defensible we defend, if it's not, we retreat! Just hold out for a while, harvest the corn, then it's freedom to return to the wilderness. These Mexica have come from the mountain city, pursuing us four hundred li, so we flee four hundred li north. At worst, after the Mexica are gone, we could move back south in a couple of years!"

Masate was silent, his feet swift as the wind. Under the escort of a hundred trusted aides, they had already fled to the edge of the Red Monkey camp. The sounds from the Allied Forces behind them had vanished, seeming to have stopped the pursuit.

Inside the camp, a red monkey flag fluttered in the wind, with a glint of red in the monkey's eyes. The guarding Canine Warriors watched briefly and then opened the camp gate, moving aside the wooden obstructions to welcome the honored Chieftain.

Arriving here, the two Chieftains slowed down. After a long silence, Masate sighed softly.

"Ozoma, you are the cunning Red Monkey, you do have a point. It's just that the Chichika leader doesn't think so. He has great prestige, commands over four thousand warriors, stationed in the formidable main camp, and controls the old camp at Pamus City... All the Great Tribes have to follow his orders."

"Heh! Masate, Chichika now basks in prestige because the southward journey went smoothly, and he annexed a good number of small tribes! Look, these past few days, after two battles with the southern Allied Forces, he has already lost over seven hundred of his elite, and his influence has wavered. Let's retreat to the main camp, and have him face off with the Mexica again..."

The Red Monkey Chieftain paused, stopping outside the camp. He looked at the Red Deer Chieftain sincerely.

"Anyway, Red Deer, in all these years, I've never harmed you! Today, I even sent troops to assist you... From now on, you must advance and retreat together with me!"

"Ah! Red Monkey, you want to..."

Masate's eyes widened, speechless for a moment, looking into Ozoma's eyes. Then, he bit his lip fiercely and hissed.

"Red Monkey... Give me the heavy hides you've captured today, and I'll agree with you!"

"... Haha, agreed!"

Ozoma paused for a moment, then burst into laughter. Without speaking further, he turned toward the camp, raising his voice to command those around him.

"Send out two teams of red-haired Scouts, to gather the scattered warriors in the forest, and keep an eye on the enemy's movements! Tidy up the camp supplies, transfer the prisoners and food to the rear! Also, set up two teams of warriors in the forest to build thatched shelters for encampment. Right, stack the dry wood at the front camp, ready the fire. With the air crisp in autumn, if the Mexica come attacking, we'll give them a surprise!"

#### Chapter 639 - Vanguard Attacks the Camp IV

"Your Highness, the Canine Descendants in the forest have been completely routed! Together with those in the camp, we have decapitated over seven hundred, about sixty of whom were red-haired. The Guamare warriors suffered nearly five hundred casualties. The Jaguar Warrior Brigade had over ten lightly wounded, with no fatalities..."

A Jaguar warrior knelt under the Royal Banner, loudly reporting back to the King.

"The majority of the enemy fled to their rear camp, should we pursue?"

"No need to chase! Order the Jaguar Warrior Brigade to return to the Royal Banner and continue to guard the central forces! Command the Guamare warriors to return to the main encampment. Tonight, everyone will be rewarded with wine and meat! Order the Jiowar Battle Group to advance, and station two thousand Ottopan Warriors at the Red Deer camp!"

Xiulote raised his head, glanced at the setting sun in the west, and continued to issue orders.

"Deploy two more scout teams to keep watch on the edges of the mountains and forests, and at the same time, be vigilant against night raids!"

"At your command, Your Highness!"

Although they had successfully taken the Red Deer camp, the Guamare warriors had encountered an ambush in the forest and suffered too many casualties. These City-State warriors, with both the strengths and weaknesses of the Wilderness Tribes, were agile, brave, and fierce, yet impulsive, irritable, and lacking discipline. They belonged to vassal battle groups and were actually led by various tribal chiefs or Otomi nobility with their private armies, making direct control difficult.

Thinking of this, Xiulote looked towards the nominal leader of the Guamare, the middle-aged Chieftain Chalki.

Chalki's face was ashen. He hesitated for a moment, clenched his teeth, and began to speak with a tremor.

"What are the casualties of the Vanguard warriors? Where is Quino?"

The Jaguar warrior gave Chalki a sympathetic glance, then looked towards His Highness. With a slight nod from Xiulote, the Jaguar warrior replied loudly.

"All the Guamare warriors in the forest have fought to their deaths! We found over two hundred bodies, but have not yet identified General Quino."

"Ah! My eldest son! My family warriors!"

Tears welled up in Chalki's eyes, his hands and feet trembling. Xiulote looked down in silence. After a long moment, the middle-aged Chieftain, with eyes red, made a request to His Highness.

"Your Highness, please let me lead the forces to attack the next camp and avenge the fallen Guamare warriors!"

"Granted! But the day has grown late today. Let us fight again at dawn tomorrow. I will send Temple Crossbowmen to bolster your ranks!"

Xiulote nodded, patted Chalki on the shoulder, and comforted him.

"The Chief Divine protects the warriors! General Quino's fate is unknown; there is still hope."

Chalki bowed his head in silence. The King pondered for a moment and then promised.

"Chalki, I have seen your courageous fight for the Alliance. No matter how much your family warriors have fallen, you will still be the leader among the Guamare factions! When the northern campaign is victorious, I will petition King Aweit, to confer on you hereditary nobility of the Alliance and command the Guamare City-State."

Upon hearing this, Chalki raised his head, his face brightening, and tears instantly disappearing. He knelt on the ground and bowed deeply to His Highness.

"Your Highness, you are the sacred wind, I am willing to serve you unto death!"

A gust of wind passed by, stirring the clothes of both men. Xiulote nodded with a smile, looking towards the distant woods where dry leaves fluttered, much like lives about to perish.

The next day, the fierce drumming of "dong dong" sounded, and the brutal slaughter began once more. Chalki personally led the elite two thousand Guamare warriors through the rugged mountain path to launch an attack on the Red Monkey camp. The Eagle Warrior Balda, leading one thousand Temple Crossbowmen, followed closely behind, providing long-range support.

The Red Monkey camp, similar to the Red Deer camp, was located on a higher hillock, surrounded by a thick wooden fence for defense. On either side of the camp rose the undulating mountains to the north and south, and the deep, dense forests. At this moment, the camp was bustling with movement and cries. Over a thousand Canine Warriors were relying on the camp, waving their bows and Stone Spears, taunting the opposing Allied Forces.

"Praise the Chief Divine!"

Under Balda's leadership, the Temple Crossbowmen grasped their Amulets and prayed to the rising sun. Their faces alight with fervor, they chanted in unison, then lifted their crossbows.

"Whiz whiz whiz!"



Crossbow bolts shot forward, covering the eighty paces in an instant, savagely penetrating the encampment and instantly resulting in wails of agony. Dozens of Canine Warriors were struck down, bolts piercing through them and nailing into the earth, with blood spurting red.

"Quick! Hide behind the wood, shoot arrows only when the enemy closes in!"

Ozoma cautiously raised his shield, shouting loudly in the camp. Then, he tugged at the bolt stuck in the wood, struggling momentarily to pull it out.

...

"Tsk, the crossbows of the Mexica pack such great power!"

The Red Monkey Chieftain's face showed surprise. He once again tugged hard and finally pulled the arrowhead out, his eyes suddenly lighting up.

"To penetrate so deep into the wood, it must be the sharp metal arrowheads! Ha-ha, Red Deer hiding in the woods still doesn't know the situation here. Once this battle is over, all these arrows will be mine!"

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

Another volley of arrows whistled through the air! Over a dozen Canine Descendants Hunters tumbled down from the rampart, while the rest laid low, hiding behind the sheltering fences and wood.

Chalki nodded his head and swung his war club, pointing towards the encampment.

"Brave Guamare warriors, charge, kill these cunning dogs!"

"Aoow!"

One thousand five hundred Guamare warriors howled and then rushed up the hill like beasts, arriving at the encampment in a moment. Some vanguard warriors hacked fiercely at the gates, while more climbed over the fences, engaging the Canine Warriors in close combat.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

More than six hundred Tribal Huntsmen popped their heads out and fired arrows in unison from a distance of just over a dozen steps, felling a swath of warriors. There were as many as three hundred red-haired hunters in the camp. Their archery was especially ruthless, each targeting the vital points of their enemies' heads and faces, regardless of those tangled up in the fray. The skirmish barely lasted a moment before hundreds of warriors fell.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

The Temple Crossbowmen advanced twenty steps, reaching the edge of the hill to support the warriors in close combat. Slightly tilting their crossbows upwards, they fired at the enemy's rear ranks! The fierce rain of arrows was like the fingers of the God of Death, piercing through the cotton armor of the elite hunters with ease, turning the Red Monkey's banner into a sieve.

"Damn Mexica archers!"

Ozoma held his shield, cursing under his breath. He quickly took off the chieftain's wolf robe and stuffed it under the wooden cover, then continued to command his tribe to resist.

"Red-haired hunters, cover each other carefully and return fire against their archers!"

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

Soon, a volley of precise bone arrows rained down from the hill, landing among the loosely formed crossbowmen and causing over a dozen casualties. Under pressure from the Temple Crossbowmen, the red-haired hunters stopped hunting enemy warriors and instead tried to suppress the firing of the crossbowmen.

"Half the crossbowmen take up shields, the other half continue firing... ugh, despicable Canine Descendants!"

Balda swung his war club, shouting orders, then was hit by two arrows. Fortunately, his copper armor took the brunt of the impact, and he merely staggered without injury. The people of Guajili were skilled in archery, especially proud of sniping officers and commanders.

"Boom..."

A great roar echoed through the front camp, followed by murderous cheers.

"The gate is broken!"

A large group of Guamare warriors poured through the shattered gate. They wore cotton armor and likewise wielded obsidian short spears and war clubs, engaging in a fierce struggle with the Canine Warriors. Both sides had tattoos on their bodies and shouted in nearly the same language, ruthlessly stabbing their weapons into each others' chests. The brutal close combat only lasted a moment before two or three hundred lay on the ground, their blood mingling on the soil.

"Who else is there!... Ugh! Heh..."

A Guamare brave roared loudly in the heat of battle, having just killed three enemies when a cold arrow struck him, hitting his throat precisely. The brave let out two hoarse cries and then fell backward, trampled underfoot by both sides. More Guamare warriors streamed in, the Canine warriors' line slowly retreating. Facing the fierce onslaught, the Canine Warriors resisted desperately, suffering heavy casualties. Behind them, occasional cold arrows from the red-haired hunters struck conspicuous warriors and nobility. The situation in the encampment was at an impasse for a moment, with life being rapidly extinguished and bodies piling up to form the fallen.

"Damn it! With the Mexica warriors as their backbone, even the Otomi dogs have become so fierce!"

Ozoma's expression was grim as he cursed bitterly. As he watched the dire battle unfold, he hesitated for a while and then clenched his fists tightly.

"The arrows of the Mexica are too sharp. If we keep on fighting, the loss of our warriors will be too great!... Forget it, we don't need this camp anymore, not these copper arrows either!"

The Red Monkey Chieftain finally made his decision. He turned his head and ordered his trusted aides.

"The Otomi dogs have surged in! Stick to the plan, ignite the dry wood and grass. Cover with archery fire from the red-haired hunters, and have the warriors who haven't engaged yet retreat to the back camp gate! Once the fire picks up, we'll abandon the camp and retreat into the woods. Let's see the dogs howl in the flames!"

Chapter 640 - Vanguard Attacks the Camp - The End

The rapid beat of war drums echoed through the mountains, drowning out the screams with intense battle cries. The pungent scent of blood spread through the camp, staining the withered grass and trees red. Suddenly, an excited shout rose from the vanguard attacking the camp.

"The enemy is fleeing!"

Xiulote stood on a hilltop, observing the battle. He saw nearly two thousand Guamare Samurai, like a tide of grey-blue, shouting and surging into the camp nestled among the mountains. The Canine Descendants were gradually unable to resist, retreating in disorder toward the rear camp, and it seemed that some areas had even caught fire. Then, a trusted aide of a chieftain, holding a long spear, removed the Red Monkey flag from the camp and fled to the rear.

"The camp has fallen. Chalki did a good job!"

The King showed a smile and nodded slightly. Large groups of Canine Descendants were dispersing from the rear of the camp, leaving only two or three hundred to cover their retreat, clearly unable to hold out for long. The King looked at the Head Warrior beside him.

"Bertade, take five hundred Imperial Guards and tidy up the vanguard. Do not enter the woods to pursue a running battle with the enemy!"

"As you command!"

The Head Warrior bowed respectfully. Then he turned around, started gathering his Imperial Guards while surveying the situation in the camp, and soon furrowed his brow.

"Your Highness, the camp is on fire."

Xiulote looked into the distance and saw isolated flames igniting on the dry grass, which had already spread to large piles of wood. In just a moment, thick, pungent smoke rose from the heated battlefield, and the figures engaged in combat became vague, while the shooting of feathered arrows also started to thin out.

"The fire has started quickly... The Canine Descendants were prepared, they set the fire deliberately!"

"Indeed. The Canine Descendants deliberately burned the camp, it looks like they were prepared to retreat, their will to fight is not high."

Bertade nodded in agreement, then his face showed worry.

"It's the dry season without rain. The camp is close to the forest, and once a large fire starts, it might be difficult to extinguish!"

"A forest fire..."

Xiulote looked around at the surrounding forest, recalled the scenes from his memory, and gave a decisive order.

"Sound the conch horn! Order the vanguard to retreat!"

"Dii-dii!... Dii-dii!..."

The sharp sound of the retreat conch horn blew, traveling hundreds of meters down the mountain path, past the thickening black smoke, right to the embattled camp.

In the heart of late autumn, the air is dry, the vegetation turned yellow, and the camp had intentionally stored plenty of dry grass and wood, making it easy to burn. Once the raging fire surged, it quickly became unmanageable and ferociously spread to the surrounding area.

The few hundred warriors at the frontlines, their eyes bloodshot and faces blackened by smoke, were still tightly entangled. They coughed forcefully while fighting fiercely, turning either their opponents or themselves into corpses. Surrounded by flames and dense smoke, blood splattered wantonly, and bodies piled up one after another. Soon after, the rolling flames licked close, and the air filled with an odd fragrance.

Chalki, bent over and coughing, issued the order to retreat. He couldn't be concerned with the frontlines, now engulfed in flames, and led over a thousand Samurai, quickly fleeing towards the outside of the camp.

The mountain wind blew chaotically, flames assaulted them, igniting the Samurai's armor and garments. The mature chieftain did not stop his feet, slapping at the flames clinging to his burned cotton armor. By the time he escaped the camp, his cotton armor was burnt through, and even a large chunk of his hair had been singed off.

Balda managed to hold back a laugh upon seeing the middle-aged chieftain's bald head and blackened face. Hm, a middle-aged bald head, somewhat fittingly comical. Then he looked forward, where rolling, thick smoke was rising, completely obscuring the line of sight for shooting. The blistering hot wind blew from the front, still bringing warmth despite the tens of steps separating them.

Before long, piercing screams arose in the burning camp, where shadowy, smoke-covered figures could be seen frantically running, then collapsing to the ground. The suffocating smoke robbed the warriors of their ability to act, and as the fire approached, they let out their final sounds, followed by nothing but the crackling of burning.



"The fire is so vast, the battling Guamare Samurai..."

Balda sniffed the burnt scent in the wind and shook his head. He quickly swung his War Club, shouting to the left and right.

"All troops retreat, keep away from the forests on both sides!"

At the edge of the forest, the Red Monkey Chieftain, Ozoma, looked on despondently, staring blankly at the fire that swept through the camp.

The fierce flames kept spreading like a terrifying Evil Demon. The demon opened its mouth wide, completely engulfing the camp. It was such a voracious seeker of life, devouring not only the more than four hundred Guamare Samurai at the front but also over two hundred Canine Warriors at the rear. Then, it thrust out its burning claws towards the forests on both sides. The thick smoke, like the demon's Scouts, had surged into the forest ahead of the flames, forcing the ambushed troops out of hiding. Thousands of Canine Warriors cried out in terror, creating utter chaos.

Red Deer Chieftain, Masate, ran out from the forest, sprinting towards us. He looked at the fire that grew fiercer, blackening the sky, his face instantly losing color, then exploding with rage.

"Cough, cough! Cough, cough!... Damn it, Red Monkey, what have you done!"

"I was... preparing a surprise for the Mexica... just lit a fire..."

Ozoma looked at the approaching flames, his face a mix of laughter and tears. He only intended to ignite the camp, never imagining the entire mountainside would be set ablaze.

In just a few moments, the fire at the camp had already completely blocked the mountain path, and without any sign of stopping, it spread in the wind, igniting the oily pines and cypresses. Soon, a great fire blazed in the forest, and surging waves of heat swept over them, setting the hair of many Canine Warriors alight, causing them to retreat in panic.

"Damn! Damn my red hair!... Ozoma, did you start this fire in the autumn forest to burn us all to death?"

Masate covered his head, taking an angry step forward. Then he grabbed Ozoma by the collar with one hand and shook him violently.

"What are you still looking at! The mountain fire has started! There's no rain this season, it won't stop until it has consumed these dozen miles of forest! Aren't you fleeing with me? The forest is completely different from the wilderness, how can you be the clever Red Monkey..."

After roaring a few words, Masate grabbed Ozoma by the arm, leading hundreds of trusted aides, and ran like their lives depended on it towards the camp at the rear. The Canine Warriors from both tribes stumbled along the mountain road, fleeing desperately towards the East. Occasionally, a panicked Canine Warrior would fall and get injured, swallowed by the pursuing flames.

The mighty breeze rolled along the mountain road, and with it, the vast wildfire spread. The thick smoke blocked out the sun, and the air was filled with a pungent smoke smell. Once a forest fire gained momentum, it was beyond human power to extinguish. Before the ferocious flames, tens of thousands of Allied Forces Warriors and Canine Warriors were forced to retreat, withdrawing more than ten miles in succession.

Xiulote abandoned the Red Deer camp, retreating all the way back to the main camp at the rear. He first urgently ordered the army to fall back, then gathered thousands of warriors, collected all Bronze Axes from the Imperial Guards, and worked day and night in sparser parts of the forest to clear a firebreak. In less than two days, the wildfire had burned towards them along the forest, devouring the Red Deer camp and reaching right before them.

In this era where civilization was just beginning, nature's flames were always attributed to the will of the divine, burning also within the hearts of the warriors. In the face of the approaching wildfire, the Otomi Warriors were frightened and disordered, seeing it as an ominous sign, clamoring for retreat.

"Praise be to the Chief Divine! He protects us, and even the fierce fire cannot surge forward!..."

In front of the vast wildfire, the King erected a high sacrificial altar and conducted a sacred ritual. To appease the greedy spirits, and even more so to calm the tens of thousands of anxious, restless troops, two hundred sixty Canine captive were sacrificed in the ritual, bound and thrown into the fire. After the grand sacrificial rite, the surging wildfire finally stopped before the firebreak.

"Huff, huff... The mountain fire has finally ceased, and the morale of the Otomi Warriors has stabilized!"

Xiulote stood solemnly high upon the altar, overlooking the legion below. Thousands of Otomi Warriors lay prostrate, praying devoutly to the Chief Divine, beseeching divine protection. Subsequently, twenty thousand warriors got up one by one, their eyes looking up at the King with reverence, as if looking towards a deity.

"The power of the wildfire is truly immense..."

Xiulote gazed towards the East, the sky-high flames still burning on both sides of the mountains, consuming all living things. Flocks of birds flew far away to escape, and the once-burned forest was filled with silence. Witnessing this scene, a new strategy emerged in the King's mind.

"Hmm, I wonder how the other Canine Descendants are faring now?"