

Civilization 661

Chapter 661: The Long Day, Dawn's Early Light

The night had fallen heavily, enveloping the mountain forest. Sparse moonlight illuminated the mountain path. In the rugged woodlands, a group of six or seven warriors, without any lit torches, were groping their way forward in darkness. They each carried small bundles on their backs and leaned on sturdy long spears, carefully trekking northward.

"So we just leave like this?"

After a silent march, Chipawa, the youngest of them, eventually couldn't contain himself and asked softly.

Zucata listened to the noises in the forest then continued walking for a while before responding in a low voice.

"What? Do you want to stay behind and surrender to the Mexica?"

"No! How could I possibly!"

Chipawa's eyes widened. Zucata quickly made a gesture for silence, and he hastily lowered his voice.

"The Mexica destroyed my hometown, killed my father... I will never surrender!"

"Hmm, none of us will surrender. Let's keep moving then!"

Zucata nodded and kept walking, glancing at Chipawa's profile from the side. From this angle, the young Militia looked like someone he had once sworn to protect with his life. Memories, long and unforgettable, surfaced, prompting a slight sigh from Zucata.

"Marshal Quiyus... I have failed you; I couldn't protect your son..."

Zucata's voice was very faint, and Chipawa didn't hear it. Of course, even if he had heard it, he wouldn't have understood.

Their meeting seemed coincidental, yet also like a tale told by the tribal Sage by the campfire. The Southern Army had disintegrated, and Chipawa was taken north by a band of fleeing soldiers, to be used as mobile provisions.

When Zucata and his group passed by, he merely glanced at Chipawa before scattering the deserters and rescuing him. Together, they continued northward, crossed the great river, and upon reaching the wilderness, they joined the tribe of the Guajili.

Zucata's actions, throughout their journey, were so decisive that it seemed he had planned them all along. Yet, plans no longer mattered since the people important to him were no longer around.

Chipawa, his head bowed, spoke up again after a while in a softer voice.

"Captain, although the Red Monkey Chieftain has sent us southward to return the captives of the Red Frog Tribe... it doesn't necessarily mean we'll surrender, does it...?"

Zucata lifted his head and gave Chipawa an indifferent look. He stayed silent for a moment, then spoke calmly.

"After taking the first step, how far can the second step be? The Priest of the Three Gods once said, when your spirit sinks into the ground, it will be drawn to the profound Netherworld. Step by step, you'll ultimately end up in the hands of the Moon Goddess... At this moment, the end is preordained. Staying longer won't change anything."

Having said that, Zucata pondered for a while before asking.

"Chipawa, are you missing the silver from the camp?"

"Ah, Captain!"

Chipawa flushed with embarrassment. He lowered his head and stammered a reply.

"The Canine Descendants surely can't hold off the Mexica, we do have to go! It's just that leaving in such a hurry, without bringing any riches... that bag of silver ingots I had finally saved up..."

Zucata shook his head. He wore a serious expression, instructing sternly.

"Chipawa, gold and silver are merely the temptations of the gods. As a Samurai, you can indulge in wealth, but you must never be bound by it! You have to be the master of wealth, not its slave!"

Chipawa, looking at Zucata's expression, bit his lip and kept quiet. After a while, he spoke quietly, "Captain, we are different. I am not a Samurai, just a conscripted Militia. In my entire life, I've never seen so much money... Back then, if my family had money, we could have bribed the conscripting Samurai... My father wouldn't have been taken in the first levy, and I wouldn't have been taken in the second. My mother and sister... their fate wouldn't be unknown..."

"Conscripting Samurai..."

Zucata fell silent. Born to the Nobility, he was a close Samurai of the Prince Quiyus. His family had served the Royal Family for nearly two hundred years. To him, the conscripting Samurai were nothing but harmless, lowly cur dogs that would obsequiously grovel and wag their tails whenever they encountered him. He knew of their local demeanor but never paid it much mind. Because, to him, the ordinary commoners were even more insignificant, akin to ants.

For over two hundred years, the hierarchy persisted as if it was natural for nobles and commoners to be different. That was until the Kingdom fell, and everything changed. Now, the displaced noble Samurai and the son of a Militia were no different - both were simply remnants of a fallen nation.

"The Kingdom is gone... The Mexica are our enemies now."

After a while, Zucata, expressionless, spoke in a low tone.

"We must survive, and survive well. Chieftain Amoxтли is ahead. Join him, and there will be hope in the East."

"Ah! So we're not going to the Red Dog Tribe but heading to find the Red Crow?"

Hearing this, Qipa was somewhat surprised. An image of valorous beauty was etched in his heart, giving him strength in an instant.

Zucata nodded and gave a blunt smile.

"Hmm. The Red Crow Chieftain is not only steadfast and decisive but also adaptable and good at learning. He's an eagle pretending to be a crow, able to avoid the storms of the rainy season, truly soaring in the wilderness skies... Qipa, you said that the Red Crow Tribe has always been preparing to migrate east."

"Yes, Sister Aran said so. They fled from the Red Fox Valley to migrate to the East, to the lands of the Vastec people,"

Qipa confirmed. He always kept Sister Aran's words to heart. In reality, Qipa was slightly older than Aran, but every time he thought of Aran shooting down the enemy with her magnificent archery, he couldn't help but see himself as the younger brother.

"That's it then. The East is the only path to survival,"

Zucata nodded in confirmation. It was this very statement that had solidified his decision to defect to the Red Crow.

"The Vastec people dwell in the lowland jungles, their customs are soft, they love the arts, and they have many craftsmen. They are like plump grass rabbits before the resolute wolves of the wilderness, incapable of much resistance... It's a broad avenue that's also enough for us to walk on..."

"Let's hurry! Ozoma is going to notice we're gone soon. He'll either send people to kill us, or... The Mexica armies will soon head north!"

At these words, everyone's pace quickened as they moved with heads bowed.

The night grew deeper. Along the way, they saw many traces of the Red Crow's movements, but they could never catch up. The elite Canine Descendants were exceptionally fast runners, even while carrying rescued captives, they would swiftly move away like the wind, eluding the Southern Samurai.

After a quarter, the main camp of the Red Dog appeared before them, a large array of bonfires twinkling at the mouth of the valley.

"What should we do?"

Qipa gasped for breath. He looked at the bonfires not far away and asked tentatively.

"The Red Dog Tribe is right ahead. Should we go and report Ozoma? The Great Chief of Chichika has always been generous..."

"Not going,"

Zucata shook his head resolutely.

"The Red Monkey is about to surrender, and the end in the north has been sealed. The Chief of Chichika has pride in his bones and will resist to the very end. Moreover, he's fierce and unpredictable in his rage... Going there now would mean death."

Everyone nodded in agreement. Zucata then lit a torch and, holding the token of the Red Monkey Tribe, boldly walked along the edge of the camp. When they encountered the small mountain patrols with red hair, he would blankly show the token, acting as an envoy of the Red Monkey Tribe. Many scouts had seen him beside Ozoma, so no one suspected him.

The group passed through unhindered for several miles, leaving the Red Dog main camp far behind. Soon, the Spear squad reached the top of the last hill. Before their eyes lay a vast open space.

In the dim light of dawn, the dying bonfires looked like stars in the sky, spreading across the entire fertile valley. The tributaries of the Tampen River flowed quietly, the riverbanks adorned with remnants of straw, clothing the land in a coat of greyish-yellow. Further away, the small town of Pamus lay like a low stone at the edge of sight, simple and time-worn.

"Pamus Valley, we're here,"

Gazing at the vast fields and rivers, Qipa's face showed longing. In that moment, he was reminded of his homeland in the South and couldn't help but speak to himself again.

"Such a rare sight in the wilderness! It would be good to stay here..."

Day was just breaking, the first light illuminating the hilltops. Zucata stood at the peak, not looking at the expansive fields but with his back to the valley. He gazed at the southern forests with a grave expression, gripping his spear tightly.

"The Mexica armies... have set out!"

At his words, everyone turned back in surprise, witnessing a breathtaking scene.

In the mountains over twenty miles away, thousands of green-clad warriors marched northward, followed by tens of thousands in gray and blue, like a mythological Feathered Serpent devouring all in its path! Leading the army by several miles, five hundred Red Frog warriors clad in Cotton Armor and armed with Bamboo Bows cleared the way. They had descended from the highlands, not pausing for a second before relentlessly charging toward the Red Dog main camp.

"Ah, look there!..."

Qipa pointed, letting out an astonished cry.

Zucata glanced at it, then lowered his eyes. In the familiar terrain of the Red Monkey camp, there now flew a flag he recognized all too well. On the flag, an abstract serpent coiled into a red sun, the symbol of the Mexica Alliance!

"The Red Monkey Tribe... has surrendered!"

A few moments later, Zucata exhaled deeply. In the breaking light of dawn, he turned steadily, leading the way towards the valley and the Red Crow Tribe without looking back.

Chapter 662: A Long Day, the Fierce Noon

The morning sun rose from the East, lighting up the golden sky and illuminating the undulating forests. Fir trees stood tall among the mountains, and their green-yellow needles swayed in the wind as if they were the feathers of deities. With the sun ascended, leaves took flight in the forests. In the depths of autumn, the Eastern Madre Mountain Range resembled the Earth Mother Goddess's splendid Feathered Garment, dazzling and enchanting to behold.

"This is the most beautiful season, and also the best time for hunting,"

Xiulote stood on the Highlands, looking toward the northern scenery with a smile on his face. Behind him, the flag of the Black Wolf fluttered high, and not far off was the surrendered camp of the Red Monkey. Below in the highlands, thousands of Mexica warriors stood with grim expressions and rattling Armor Leaves, surging towards the main camp of the Red Dog.

The gaze of the King fell on the camp of the Red Dog. He carefully observed for a moment and then pointed with his hand.

"Ozoma, that one standing on high, clad in a Wolf Robe, is that Chichika?"

"Indeed it is, respected God of Death Great Chief,"

The Red Monkey Chieftain Ozoma knelt on the ground, his expression extremely reverent. He was like a wolf that had left its pack, now pledging allegiance to a new Wolf King.

"Ozoma, you dare betray me!"

From a high place in the Red Dog camp, the old Wolf King's eyes were blood-red, suppressing a chest full of anger and feeling a bone-deep chill. At this moment, in Chichika's eyes, the Great Chief, there wasn't the sweep of colorful forests, only the decay of all things, no sight of autumn's splendor, only a harsh winter imminent.

"Great Chief, the Red Monkey Tribe has betrayed us. The Mexica legion is about to attack!"

The trusted aide was panic-stricken, kneeling at Chichika's feet. The sudden betrayal by the Red Monkey Tribe allowed the enemy to be at their doorstep in an instant. The Red Dog's main camp had no time to muster its Tribes or to prepare its defenses. At this moment, only four thousand warriors were in the camp, about to face the enemy's vanguard!

"What is there to fear!"

Chichika roared loudly, raising a foot and kicking the trusted aide to the ground. His expression was fierce, utterly fearless, as he shouted angrily.

"When two packs of wolves meet in the wilderness, both hungry, there's nothing left but to fight!"

"As you command, Great Chief!"

The trusted aide rolled over and continued to kneel. As long as the Great Chief was unflustered, his heart quickly settled down.

"Defend the camp! Raise the Tribe's war flags, sound the horns for a fight to the death! Red-haired Hunters take shooting positions, Tribal Warriors raise shields for cover, and the Chief's Guard commands from the rear. Select a group of daredevils, ready to sortie from the camp at any time!"

Chichika shouted commands, each being relayed rapidly. After a brief pause, the Great Chief issued another order.

"Send an Envoy to the Red Crow camp of Amoxтли, have him hasten to lead all the valley Tribes here for support!"

"As you command, Great Chief!"

Two members of the trusted guard immediately emerged, carrying the chief's token, and ran towards the valley to the rear.

After making these arrangements, Chichika's face showed a murderous intent, as he roared ferociously.

"Go, bring over the kinsmen of the Red Monkey Tribe!"

Soon, the trusted aides escorted six men. Months ago, after establishing his status as the leader of the Red Dog Tribe, Chichika began to consolidate his authority. He had recruited several prominent kinsmen as personal trusted aides from various major Tribes, naturally including the Red Monkey Tribe.

Among these men, the one with the highest status was Ozoma's clan brother. As soon as he arrived, he knelt down with a thud, pleading loudly.

"Great Chief, I was utterly unaware of Ozoma's surrender! Please spare me...uh!"

Chichika quickly stepped forward, grabbing the other's hair with his left hand, and producing a Long Dagger with his right, aimed it at the throat, slashing fiercely.

"Zhirr..."

A warm spray burst forth. Chichika stretched out his hand, catching the flowing warmth, and smeared his face and hair bright red. This was an ancient custom of the wilderness, applying the sacred red to engage in a desperate battle!

Seeing this scene, the trusted aides knew the Great Chief's resolve. They were stirred, each drew their Daggers, killed the remaining Red Monkey kinsmen, and similarly smeared themselves with bright red.

"Good!"

Chichika looked around at his aides, whose morale was high, and satisfied, he howled.

"Howl! Cut off these men's heads, hang them beside the flag of the Red Dog. Today I shall stand here, not retreat a step, and fight the Mexica to the death!"

"Howl! Fight to the death!"

The trusted aides echoed in unison, then split up to lead their squads in a fight to the death.

The Red Dog's main camp occupied a mountain pass, with high mountains to the east, forests to the west, and mountain paths to the north and south. The Mexica army approached from the south, the vanguard composed of five hundred Red Frog warriors. The Red Frog warriors swiftly attacked, engaging in close combat with the Red Dog Scouts outside the main camp. Both sides were Light Infantry Hunters, mutually attacking and vying for the battlefield in front of the camp. Soon, blood soaked everywhere.

A quarter later, the main force of the Mexica legion finally arrived, and the Red Dog Scouts were driven back to the camp. Bertade himself donned Armor commanding, waving the command flag. Over a thousand Temple Crossbowmen then deployed in front of the camp, advancing within a hundred steps, and then simultaneously fired.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

The arrow bolts rained down, striking fiercely upward, burying deep in the fortress wall of the Red Dog's main camp, forcing the opposing Hunters to keep their heads down. The Red Dog's main camp had been recently constructed, its walls crude and low, yet it occupied a higher position, granting a geographical advantage. At this moment, Tribe Warriors were holding up Wooden Shields, Red-haired Hunters crouched behind the walls, all waiting together for the deadly skirmish.

There was no need to conserve Arrows today. Bertade patiently waited, allowing the Crossbowmen to fire five rounds, until red was everywhere behind the walls, then he waved the battle flag again.

"First Ottopan Warriors, charge! Longbow aide-de-camp, close-range shooting!"

Chapter 663: A Long Day, The Intense Noon_2

The fierce battle drums rang out, and thousands of Ottopan Warriors clad in cotton armor, tightly grasping war clubs and shields, charged toward the high encampments. Following in the gray-blue figures' wake were over a thousand trusted aides in bronze cloth armor, wielding longbows as tall as a man. Approaching within fifty steps of the palisade walls, they exchanged shots with the Hunters within the camp.

"Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!"

The whistling rain of arrows descended from above, striking the vital points of the Otomi Warriors. The Red Dog Tribe, with more than six hundred red-haired fighters, was almost twice the size of a common great tribe. These elite Hunters, shooting from a height, rarely missed their targets. Within just two rounds of shooting, the charging Otomi Warriors had lost over a hundred men, and their morale plummeted.

"Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!"

Fierce copper arrows shot upward, carrying a powerful force, piercing through the high-positioned red-haired hunters. The Longbow Aides, their expressions stern, took advantage of the protection of their copper armor to shoot down the enemy's elite. The red-haired hunters fired another round at the warriors, then had to shift their targets to engage with the thick-skinned Longbow Aides.

As the archers on both sides suppressed each other, the charging Otomi Warriors faced no more obstacles. They roared as they neared the palisade walls, then climbed up, engaging in close combat with the Canine Warriors!

The brutal melee devoured the lives of warriors on both sides, as blood and bodies fell like autumn leaves and blossomed like cactus flowers. In less than a quarter of an hour, the charging thousand Ottopan Warriors had nearly halved, teetering on the brink of collapse.

Bertade watched the fighting on the palisade walls with a calm expression. He saw the Canine Warriors gradually gathering below the walls and the red-haired hunters also revealing themselves, and then he waved the signal flag.

"First vanguard unit, throw the Divine Power Globes!"

The army had departed from the Rivermouth Fort, traveling north over seven hundred li, carrying a limited number of gunpowder weapons. During the attack on Red Fox Valley, they had consumed too much Clay Tribulus, and only enough remained for one round of throwing, which they had saved until now. In fact, early gunpowder would gradually lose saltpeter during long marches, thereby reducing its potency. At this moment, the Clay Tribulus, while potentially limited in explosive power, served more to shock the enemy troops.

"Praise the Chief Divine, sacrifice for God!"

The first unit's two hundred vanguard barbarians fervently prayed and screamed in zeal. Then, clutching ignited Divine Power Globes, they rushed toward the palisade walls. Along the way, the Longbow Aides stepped aside, leaving a wide path for the charge.

"Quick! Red-haired hunters, shoot down the charging enemies!"

Seeing this, Chichika, who personally supervised the battle, changed his expression and repeatedly shouted. He had heard from Amoxтли of the Red Crow Tribe that these Divine Power Globes were immensely powerful. Although inconvenient for field battles, they were truly effective weapons for attacking camps!

The Red Dog Tribe, encountering such weapons for the first time, could hardly react. In just a moment, hundreds of smoking globes had been thrown into the camp, rolling to the feet of the entangled fighters. The Ottopan Warriors, already hard-pressed, now felt even more like doomed spirits. They desperately dropped their enemies and jumped off the palisade walls, fleeing toward the camp's outskirts.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!..."

While the Canine Warriors were still puzzled, the terrifying explosions erupted like thunderclaps one after another. Hundreds of tribal warriors fell on the spot, and the red-haired hunters were also stunned and disoriented by the blasts. Bertade, disregarding the scattering warriors of the first unit, solemnly issued his orders.

"Second Ottopan Warrior unit, charge to the death!"

"Roar! Kill!"

A thousand gray-blue warriors shouted out loud, then surged-up the encampments. The new round of charges was unstoppable, and the Canine Defense Army, yet to recover from the shock, was slaughtered by the warriors. In less than a quarter of an hour, the main camp's walls were breached. After several rounds of fighting, the Red Dog Tribe lost nearly a thousand warriors. The remaining four hundred-plus red-haired fighters retreated into the camp, continuing to resist with arrows.

"Chieftain's guard, advance! Block them!"

Seeing the breach in the palisade walls, Chichika, the Great Chief, was furious. The sun had just reached mid-sky, and it would take time for the aid from the Red Crow Tribe to arrive! He personally took up a shield, came to the center of the encampment, and rallied the tribe's morale. The reserve of two thousand warriors also surged forward, engaging in close combat with the invading warriors.

The boiling cries of battle shook the valley's mouth, warm blood forming streams. The Red Dog Tribe fought to the death, the situation in the camp reaching a stalemate.

Bertade stepped forward a hundred steps, arriving outside the main camp. He focused on the carnage inside, his brow deeply furrowed.

The terrain within the Red Dog encampment was complex with varying elevations. The warriors of both sides were intermingled, like interlocking teeth. The archers' lines of sight were also obstructed by the complex terrain, making shooting difficult.

The legion's warriors had already breached the palisade walls, making deep inroads into the encampment. Usually at this point, whether it was the defending army of Tarasco or the tribes of Red

Fox Valley, they would quickly disperse. However, at this moment, the Red Dog Tribe was still fiercely resisting, showing no signs of dispersion. The ones close to breaking weren't the intruding Otomi Warriors!

"The Red Dog Tribe is truly tenacious!"

Xiute stood on the highlands, overlooking the battle. He saw the gray-blue tide of warriors charging in, firmly blocked by the Red Dog warriors, and even slowly pushed back toward the palisade walls. Somewhat surprised, the King couldn't help but praise the opponent.

"Chichika deserves the loyalty of warriors, a true hero!"

Ozoma looked embarrassed, lowering his head and agreeing, momentarily unsure how to respond. A few steps away, the Poet Balamo, eyes sparkling with inspiration, watched the battlefield and recited loudly.

"...The most beautiful onyx in the world is the blood pearls of warriors! They glitter under the dazzling sun, they scatter in the sacred long wind... Indomitable and undaunted spirits, like rocks solidified in a volcano, even the God of Death leading souls cannot take you away!..."

Chapter 664: A Long Day, The Intense Noon_3

"Hmm?"

Hearing this, "God of Death Great Chief" Xiute raised an eyebrow. Ozoma also looked up in surprise.

Balamo paused for a moment, then remembered His Highness's new title from the past two years. His expression unchanged, he continued to sing loudly.

"But the power of the God of Death is always eternal! The fickle fate, like clouds, changes, but ultimately, the drizzle falls. Just as the life of the warrior, destined to wither in the hands of the supreme God of Death!..."

"Enough! Balamo, the poem is well done."

Xiulote waved his hand, and Balamo obediently fell silent. Xiulote then pondered for a while before looking to his side.

"Ozoma, it seems Chichika has made up his mind to resist to the end. The sun has already risen to mid-sky, and reinforcements in the valley might arrive at any moment... I do not wish for many warriors to fall. Do you have any suggestions?"

As the King's gaze fell upon him, Ozoma hurriedly prostrated respectfully. His thoughts whirling rapidly, he soon had an idea.

"Respected God of Death Great Chief. The main camp of the Red Dog was built recently and indeed has some oversights," Ozoma respectfully answered.

"Hmm?"

"To the east of the camp are steep mountains. If we climb the mountain ridges and shoot from above, we can completely suppress the main camp!"

Hearing this, Xiulote looked in the direction of the camp, examining the terrain, and shook his head in disappointment.

"The mountainside to the east is so steep, and there are Canine Descendant Hunters shooting from the hillside. Even if we send elite troops to climb, who knows how much time it will take. It's of no help to the current battle situation!"

"Great Chief, do you know why the Red Monkey camp is set in these highlands?"

Hearing this, a confident smile appeared on Ozoma's face.

"Oh? Are you suggesting.."

Xiulote's thoughts were stirred.

"Exactly! There is a hidden and narrow mountain path behind the highland that connects to the mountains on the east side of the main camp. From this path to the north, it only takes two to three quarters to reach that mountain! Once we hold the high ground, not only can we suppress the camp, but shooting Chichika is by no means a difficult task!"

"Very well!"

Xiulote nodded in satisfaction. He glanced at the respectful Ozoma and suddenly smiled.

"Ozoma, the Red Monkey Tribe is familiar with the terrain. I hear you have three hundred red-haired Hunters, strike out for me this time!"

"Ah, this..."

Ozoma hesitated slightly, then knelt to the ground.

"Great Chief, the Red Monkey Tribe has suffered losses along the way, now only two hundred red-haired remain!"

"No matter."

Xiulote smiled, calmly issuing the order, yet leaving no room for refusal.

"The Red Frog Tribe still has three hundred red-haired. Then let Miwa strike out, taking the Red Monkey Hunters to climb the mountain path and attack! Five hundred Hunters holding the high ground is enough to settle the matter."

"Miwa... Zucata..."

Hearing these familiar names, Ozoma drifted slightly, his emotions fluctuating.

On the night of the Fire Attack, Miwa led several elite troops to raid the Red Monkey camp, only to be defeated by Zucata's Spear Guard and subsequently captured by the tribe. Ozoma personally interrogated Miwa, learned about the treatment after the Red Frog Tribe's surrender, and then began to entertain thoughts of surrender.

Then, while stationed at the camp at the valley entrance, he sent Zucata to escort Miwa southward, as an act of sincerity in negotiations. Unexpectedly, although Zucata secretly left, he still completed the escort mission. Now, the Great Chief was actually asking Miwa to lead the elite Hunters of the Red Monkey Tribe. Truly, the world changes...

"Hmm? What's wrong, Ozoma, are you unwilling?"

Xiulote's gaze bore down, carrying mountainous pressure.

"Ah! Willing to die for the Great Chief!"

Ozoma snapped back to reality and prostrated himself on the ground.

"I will personally lead the guard..."

"There's no need, Ozoma. Stay by my side and devise strategies for me."

Xiulote shook his head. His smile was gentle, yet it sent a shiver through Ozoma.

"Leave the matters of the Red Monkey Tribe to your trusted aides for now!"

"...Yes, I obey your command, my Wolf King."

Ozoma pursed his lips and received the order while prostrated. Then, he summoned his trusted aide and instructed him to deploy the red-haired Hunters. After a while, he gritted his teeth, glanced at the distant fight, and spoke softly.

"Great Chief."

"Hmm?"

"I have another suggestion."

"Speak."

"Although the forest on the west side of the camp is dense, we could send an elite squad to circle to the rear of the main camp!"

"You mean... block Chichika's retreat?"

Xiulote paused slightly. He pondered for a moment, then asked.

"With the current situation, if Chichika were to retreat, the Red Dog Tribe would instantly crumble, thus saving us the effort of attacking!"

"Great Chief, your divine revelation is brilliant!"

Ozoma first nodded respectfully, then slowly spoke.

"The squad will not just block Chichika's retreat, but also his reinforcements!"

"Reinforcements? The Red Crow Tribe has thousands of warriors. What can a few squads do? Quickly conquering the Red Dog camp and capturing Chichika is our priority!"

Xiulote smiled, unconcerned.

"Great Chief, a few squads may not stop the people, but they can stop the hearts."

"Stop the hearts?"

"Exactly."

Ozoma smirked slyly, his eyes gleaming like those of an old monkey deep in the forest.

"Red Crow Chieftain Amoxtli may appear loyal, but he is actually very cunning. If he comes with full force, naturally we could not stop him. But if he has other intentions, these squadrons could help him persuade himself and his tribe..."

At this point, Ozoma prostrated himself again, respectfully asking for a chance to fight.

"Great Chief, the Red Monkey Tribe still has three thousand warriors ready to die for you! We can assign five hundred soldiers familiar with the terrain to cut off the main camp's escape route!"

Hearing this, Xiulote turned around and looked at Ozoma. His face was full of sincerity, as if he had truly and utterly submitted.

After a long moment, Xiulote finally nodded.

"Good! Ozoma, you are much smarter than the Red Frog Chieftain. Deploy the men and make it happen!"

"I obey your command! Mighty God of Death Great Chief, Ozoma swears to dutifully serve under your mighty power as your loyal Wolf from now on. As long as your power endures, my loyalty will never change... this oath is witnessed by our ancestors!"

Ozoma made his oath on the ground, uttering the words he had prepared long ago. He looked up at the expression of the Great Chief before retreating backwards.

Xiulote smiled slightly, his eyes reflecting a King's detached demeanor. He stood tall on the high ground, squinting his eyes and looked up at the sky.

At that moment, the sun was overhead, and battle cries echoed through the mountains mixed with the moans of the dying. The sky was a clear blue, and the sunlight was golden like fire, marking a fierce noon!

Chapter 665: A Long Day, Red Dusk

The wilderness wind never ceased. It blew over the fertile valleys, past the riverside farms, carrying the scent of withered yellow and bringing news from the south. It swept over the unused sacrificial altar, gently caressed the ancient stone walls, and reached the outskirts of the ancient Pamus City, all the way to the newly established Red Crow encampment.

Although it was called the Red Crow encampment, aside from an inherited banner, there weren't many old members of the Red Crows. Three days ago, Alan had already led eight hundred able-bodied men and over a thousand women and children, bearing the harvested food, to migrate eastward along the Tamen River.

This long-planned migration did not escape the ears of the Great Chief of Chichika. However, when the Great Chief learned of the number of able-bodied men, he silently approved the early retreat of the women and children. He even arranged for four hundred Canine Warriors, over two thousand Canine women and children, and an additional three thousand women and children from vassal tribes, amounting to eight thousand people, to migrate eastward.

Among the eight thousand migrants, there wasn't a single elderly, sick, or weak person. Even the Canine women and adolescents were capable of drawing Hunting Bows and wielding Stone Spears. By now, they likely had already boarded the prepared rafts, floating downstream along the Tamen River, travelling over a hundred miles to the east.

After these eight thousand people departed, there remained over thirty thousand members of the Guajili Tribe in the valley, preparing for war, along with six thousand Agricultural Slaves and prisoners of

war from the Otomi. After continual fierce battles, the troops in the valley were few in number. Only the three thousand Tribal Warriors of the Red Crow encampment remained, alongside several thousand adult able-bodied men scattered among the tribes.

Thinking of this, Amoxtli's expression was resolute, and his eyes showed an intrepid fighting spirit. He nodded to Zucata, who had brought the intelligence, and spoke kindly.

"Brother Zucata, thank you for the intelligence! Military matters are urgent, I must gather the encampment's warriors and reinforce the south as quickly as possible!"

Hearing these words, Zucata's expression changed. He opened his mouth, wanting to offer some advice but was interrupted by a gesture from Amoxtli. He could only retreat to one side with several people from Chipawa.

When the Spear squad arrived at the Red Crow encampment, they did not conceal the military situation in the south. At this moment, chiefs and warriors from various tribes had heard the news and were hastily gathering. There was much discussion and concern, and the Red Crow encampment was a scene of tumult.

Amoxtli raised his hands, and slowly people fell silent. With bright eyes, he looked around confidently and shouted with a proud heart.

"Chiefs from all tribes, warriors! The cowardly Monkey Tribe has surrendered, and the cruel Mexica are attacking the Great Chief's main encampment! The valiant Great Chief is engaged in a fierce battle, keeping the Mexica at bay outside our homeland! Now, with three thousand warriors gathered here, let us go with a resolve to die if need be, to rescue our noble Great Chief and defeat the cruel Mexica!"

Hearing this, many faces among the Canine Warriors showed worry and unease. They were mostly soldiers who had fled from various tribes, and they had only been reorganized a few days. The night of wildfire still haunted them like a nightmare, instilling fear in their hearts.

After a moment of silence, a Chieftain of the Red Salamander tribe stepped forward and questioned aloud.

"Amoxtli, you are just the Clan Leader of the small Red Crow Tribe, having fled from the Red Fox Valley. What right do you have to command our Red Salamander warriors?"

Hearing this, Amoxtli's demeanor remained unchanged. He laughed heartily and responded loudly.

"I am the Clan Leader of the Red Crow Tribe and the rear encampment leader personally appointed by the Great Chief of Chichika, in charge of all the reserve warriors!"

"The Great Chief places great trust in me, summoning me to his side and entrusting me with great responsibility! I also fear no danger, going through fire and water for the Tribal Alliance!"

Saying this, Amoxtli suddenly lifted his Wolf Robe to reveal his chest full of scars.

"I fought with the warriors of the Cactus Tribe in the Red Fox Valley and wounded the enemy's Black Wolf General! I went to battle alongside the warriors of Uman and attacked the fearsome Great Chief of the God of Death!... These days, I have also led elites several times deep into the south, raiding the camps of the Cactus Tribe and rescuing hundreds of warriors!"

Hearing this, the warriors who had been rescued expressed their excitement, loudly chanting Amoxtli's name. They admired the Red Crow Chieftain and were willing to die for him.

Amoxtli became even more impassioned. Clenching his fists, he struck his bare chest and roared at the crowd.

"Come! Look at the scars on my chest, all marks left from fighting face to face with the Cactus warriors! I am both the Great Chief's beloved general and a warrior of the Alliance! How could I not have the right to command the valley's warriors?!"

The camp's warriors were persuaded by Amoxtli's spirit and began pounding their chests in a disorderly chorus of agreement.

"Good!"

"A true warrior!"

"I support you!..."

The excited shouts echoed around the encampment, lingering for a long time. It wasn't until an elder entered the center that everyone rapidly fell silent. Zucata looked closely and saw that it was the revered wilderness Priest Zuma from among the Guajili Tribes.

bes.

Priest Zuma was sombre in demeanor, dressed in ancient robes, holding a carved wooden staff. He stepped into the center, paused his staff on the ground, and proclaimed firmly.

"Hold on! Whether Amoxтли is qualified to lead the people of this encampment, he doesn't have the final say, nor do you, we must ask the Earth Mother Goddess!"

Hearing this, everyone was momentarily taken aback. The Guajili revered heaven and earth, worshipped wind and fire, and regarded the color red as sacred. The Earth Mother Goddess held an exalted position and was not a deity with a specific form but more like the Lord of Heaven in the Celestial Empire.

"Someone light the sacrificial fire basin!"

Priest Zuma shouted to those nearby, and immediately someone brought over the prepared fire basin. The fire basin burned with dry pine wood and was mixed with unnamed herbs. As the wind blew, the scent of pine and herbs dispersed, and everyone's expression turned solemn.

Chapter 666: A Long Day, Red Dusk_2

Zucata stood to the side, his expression fraught with anxiety. He harbored some preposterous thoughts. With such urgent military situation in the south, whether to fight or flee, a decisive choice had to be made. Yet at this time, the people of Guajili in the camp were actually holding a divination?

Thinking this, Zucata shook his head repeatedly. Unfortunately, in such a sacred occasion, being a foreigner, he had no right to speak and could only watch in silence.

"Divine Earth and Heavens, exalted ancestors! Please listen to the call of the Earth's children... At this critical juncture, bestow upon me the holy enlightenment... I ask, is the warrior Amoxtli the chosen leader of Guajili by the revered Earth Mother Goddess?"

The Priest Zuma chanted loudly and began to dance a strange and mysterious dance. The wooden bells on his body jingled with the movement, producing a special sound that made everyone present somewhat dizzy. After a while, Zuma stepped forward and threw a piece of wild buffalo skull into the fire. The intense flames cracked the skull, and the old priest then took out a handful of powder from his bosom and suddenly threw it into the fire bowl.

"Whoosh!"

The flames in the fire bowl suddenly surged, startling everyone into stepping back in unison. Priest Zuma remained unflinching. He took out a piece of rough white "cloth" from his bosom, wrapped it around his hand, then abruptly reached into the blazing flame and grabbed the cracked skull out.

The old priest examined the piece of skull for a moment, his expression shifting for a long time. Under the watchful eyes of everyone, he suddenly knelt down and respectfully bowed to Amoxtli.

"Ah! The skull has cracked with a heavenly pattern, it is the most sacred omen! Chieftain Amoxtli, the Earth Mother Goddess recognizes you, you are indeed the leader chosen by Heaven and Earth!"

Then, Priest Zuma turned and solemnly called out to the people.

"Why do you not kneel quickly, pray to the Earth Mother Goddess! Pay homage to the Heaven-chosen Chieftain Amoxtli!"

Zucata watched with a cold eye, finally discerning some flavor to the situation. He thought for a moment and a smile emerged on his face as he knelt down in homage. However, there were many warriors whose reaction was even quicker. Without hesitation, these men fell to their knees, uniformly shouting out loud.

"We greet you, Chieftain Amoxtli! Leader chosen by the Earth Mother Goddess!"

Seeing the miraculous scene and hearing the high calls of the people, thousands of tribal warriors knelt down in homage to Chieftain Amoxltli. Hundreds of saved warriors shouted fervently, the atmosphere infecting the hearts of those present. The dozens of tribal chieftains looked at each other, their expressions flickering, but they too slowly knelt down, following the trend.

Seeing the people kneeling before him, Amoxltli laughed heartily. His expression was determined, eyes bright, and his passion burned like fire.

"My warriors, my brave men, stand up! The Earth Mother Goddess has chosen me, and I shall live and die with you all! Now, the noble Chichika Chieftain is resisting the cruel Mexica in the south! The children of the wilderness will never submit. Let me lead you to support Chichika Chieftain and fight to the death with the God of Death Great Chief!"

"We obey you, Chieftain Amoxltli! We'll fight to the death with you!"

Hearing this, the tribal warriors showed admiration and shouted frantically as they lay prostrate. They were already won over by Amoxltli, and at this moment, all of them were invigorated, awakening the valiant blood of the Canine Descendants. At this moment, the stature of Amoxltli loomed large like a Great Chief. The boiling cheers echoed throughout the encampment, as if victory was already theirs.

Upon hearing they were to march south, Zucata frowned. He looked at the senior chieftains, who were also visibly disturbed, their faces showing concern.

At the crucial moment, it was Priest Zuma who stood out. He walked forward two steps, raised his staff, first bowed his head in respect to Amoxltli, and then looked towards the excited warriors.

"The southern campaign is critical to the survival of the Guajili. Before this battle, let me inquire of the Earth Mother Goddess of our fortunes."

Amoxltli pondered for a moment, nodding his head with extraordinary solemnity.

"Very well! I entrust this to you, respected Priest Zuma!"

Seeing Amoxтли's respectful attitude, Priest Zuma nodded in satisfaction. He lit incense again, sang, and danced, then once more threw the buffalo skull into the fire.

A solemn silence fell upon the vast encampment. Thousands of tribal warriors waited uneasily for the divination result. Priest Zuma chanted for a while, then once more scattered the powder, and suddenly retrieved the cracked skull from the burning flames.

The old priest held the skull, his face serious, looking at it for a long time without a word.

"Respected Priest Zuma, what is the result of the divination? The noble Chichika Chieftain is waiting for my reinforcements!"

Amoxтли's expression was eager as he asked. Everyone also held their breath in anticipation.

"Respected Chieftain Amoxтли."

Priest Zuma pondered for a while, speaking calmly.

"The Divine Revelation of the Earth Mother Goddess has been bestowed. But before announcing it, there is one last step to take!"

"Please instruct me, Priest!"

Amoxтли responded solemnly.

"The Earth Mother Goddess says, please, Chieftain Amoxтли, drink the burned divination powder to receive the enlightenment of the Heavenly Divine!"

Priest Zuma surveyed the crowd with a grave expression.

Upon hearing this, Zucata pinched his fingers in confusion, wondering what would unfold next.

"Very well!"

Amoxтли readily agreed. He accepted a handful of divination powder, swallowed it, then took the water bottle passed to him by Zuma the Priest and drained it in one gulp.

"Ah? This is... I see!..."

Amoxтли stood frozen for a moment, his gaze becoming vacant and confused. A profound shock surfaced on his face, pulling at the hearts of all the warriors. Suddenly, Amoxтли threw back his head and let out a painful scream.

"Ah!..."

The terrible cry roared like a wild beast, shaking the whole camp. Everyone was jolted, looking up, the respected leader Amoxтли had fainted amidst the Divine Revelation.

"What... What happened?"

"What exactly did the leader see?"

"What is the prophecy?"

The warriors' cries of panic rose. Yet Zuma the High Priest was calm, unhurried. He raised the Divine Staff in one hand, and the divination bone of a bull's head in the other, and bellowed in his aged voice.

"The Earth Mother Goddess has bestowed a Divine Revelation!"

At these words, the camp once again fell silent, save for the old priest's heart-stirring chant.

"The south is profound darkness, an irresistible rest. The shadow of the God of Death comes from the south, soon to devour everything in the valley!... The Earth Mother Goddess says, our home is not here, but in the fertile land beyond the mountains, where the great river flows! The vigour of the Guajili people lies in the East!"

"Ah! This! Respected Zuma the Priest, what exactly does the Mother Goddess's Divine Revelation mean?"

"The meaning of the Divine Revelation is..."

Zuma the Priest raised the wooden staff, his gaze once again to the south. In his whitening old eyes, a flash of vengeful satisfaction came and went.

"Fate is already decided! The Chichika leader will return to the Earth, the Cactus Tribe will conquer the valley. And those of us in the camp must immediately migrate to the East, escorting the tribes that have gone ahead, to re-establish ourselves in the mountains of the East!"

"Ah? Migrate to the East!..."

The silence of the people didn't last long, the Red Crow's camp quickly stirred to life. The citizens of the wilderness had long grown accustomed to migration, and once a direction was chosen, they didn't hesitate for long. Soon, three thousand Tribal Warriors packed up their food and weapons, abandoning their baggage and camp, swiftly marching towards the East. And a dozen envoys set out simultaneously, to notify all parts of the valley of the Mother Goddess's Divine Revelation.

Zucata watched all this, silently contemplating in his heart. He, along with a few old brothers from Tarasco, carried their spears, following the rapidly migrating crowd.

"Qipa."

"Chieftain Zucata."

"Good, very good."

A smile touched Zucata's stolid face.

"Ah, what's very good?"

Qipa scratched his head, somewhat puzzled.

"The Red Crow Chieftain, very good... and our choice, also very good!"

Zucata smiled faintly, looking up to the sky. The sun was already sloping westward, the red twilight saturating the sky, covering the earth, and enveloping the mountains to the south.

"Such a brilliant dusk. The battle in the south must have ended by now! The old Wolf King sinks into the Abyss of death, and a new Wolf King is born in the mountains. A long day is finally coming to an end!"

Qipa nodded, not fully understanding, as he looked toward the front where the unconscious leader Amoxtli lay on a wooden frame two men high, motionless, carried by the loyal Red Crow warriors.

"It is like carrying a sacrifice..."

The young Militia murmured to himself. But Zucata just laughed and shook his head.

"No, from today on, that is a hero with divinity!"

Their conversation dissipated in the wind, trailing off quietly.

On the wooden frame, the divine Amoxtli remained still, noiselessly opening his eyes. His eyes were clear and bright, reflecting the red dusk, and mirroring the vast world.

"May you rest in peace! Great Chief of Chichika... I am back! Ahlan..."

Chapter 667: The Death of Chichika, The Heart of a King

The wilderness sunset was a profound red, sinking slowly into distant mountains. The mountaintops were bathed in a myriad of sunset hues, painting the sky a fresh red, which in turn soaked the earth with a bloody hue. In the blood-red twilight, the brutal battle had ended.

The main camp of the Red Dog at the valley's entrance was full of wreckage, the edges charred and blackened, the interior a dark red stained with blood. Thousands of broken warrior bodies layered like fallen maple leaves; countless snapped bone arrows and copper arrows were as dense as grass. The closer to the center, the more so it became.

A pair of deer hide shoes stepped into the camp, surrounded by a throng of straw sandals. The deer hide shoes moved slowly towards the interior of the camp, passing over fallen bodies, until reaching the Red Dog's flag. By then, the Red Dog flag, passed down through many years, was already broken, its face submerged in the blood-mud, tattered and fragmented.

And there, a robust body lay supine next to the Red Dog flag. His eyes were wide with rage, his face covered in blood, hair dyed red, a wolf robe draped on his back, his hands clenched around a war club. He had over a dozen feathered arrows stuck in his body, but the fatal wound was likely the two-finger-wide blood hole in his left chest, pierced by a copper spear through the heart. His limbs still retained the posture of his last moments, as if he was still fighting. For in the moment of death, his body exerted itself tremendously, his muscles contracting in spasms, resulting in the rigid form of his corpse.

The owner of the deer hide shoes finally stopped walking. His gaze lingered on the body, and after a long pause, he asked in a deep voice.

"Ozoma, is this the leader of the Guajili Alliance, the Chieftain of the Red Dog Tribe, Chichika?"

"Yes, respected God of Death Great Chief."

Ozoma's face bore a hint of bewilderment. Although he was prepared, he still felt a sense of unreality: The Red Dog Chieftain, fierce and brave, who roamed the wilderness like a Wolf King for over a decade, was now lying here in silence? He stared intently at Chichika's corpse and couldn't help but reach out to feel Chichika's breath.

Seeing this, Xiulote shook his head. He looked at the blood hole in Chichika's chest, lost in thought.

"Your Highness, please forgive me!... I was unable to capture the enemy leader Chichika alive, and his heart was damaged..."

Bertade knelt on one knee, his expression one of shame. As the nominal significant objective of the northern campaign, the heart of the Canine Descendant leader Chichika needed to be offered as a sacrifice to the Chief Divine to proclaim the victory of the campaign. It was for this very sacrifice that Chichika, even after his death in battle, had not been beheaded by the samurai.

"It doesn't matter. The victory ceremony will not be affected. The Chief Divine blesses us and will surely be satisfied with the sacrifices."

Xiulote smiled slightly, affirming. Before long, he would preside over the grand victory ceremony outside Pamus City, to announce the blessing of the Chief Divine.

"Chichika died fighting without retreating?"

"Yes, your Highness."

Bertade stood up, his expression regaining its composure.

"Five hundred Hunters from the eastern mountains shot down at the camp from above, killing many red-haired Hunters. The spirit of the Red Dog Tribe plummeted, the line quickly disintegrated, and they could no longer hold. The heavily armored Jaguar Warrior Brigade then launched a charge and utterly broke the Red Dog Tribes...Chichika stood fighting under the flag until his death without taking a single step back."

"I see."

Xiulote nodded slowly.

"Where is the warrior who killed Chichika? I want to reward him generously!"

Hearing this, Bertade paused slightly. He extended his hand and pointed towards Chichika's side.

"Your Highness, that corpse holding a spear is the one."

Xiulote looked in that direction, only to see a samurai wearing an eagle helmet, clutching a broken short spear, tangled with two red-haired Canine Descendants, dead together. Centered around Chichika's position, a dense ring of corpses from both sides lay, many with distinctive red hair.

"After Chichika died, the Chieftain's guard went mad! Over a hundred red-haired ones charged at the legions without concern for their lives, dragging the assaulting samurai to their deaths together. Even the heavily armored Jaguar Warrior Brigade lost five... However, after this batch of Chieftain guards died, the remaining thousand or so Red Dog warriors all knelt and surrendered."

"Four thousand Red Dog warriors, nearly half dead, hundreds scattered, only a little over a thousand surrendered..."

The King watched in silence for a while, voicing his sentiments.

"Chichika indeed does not die a wrongful death as he was honored with a warrior's sacrifice!"

Bertade nodded in agreement. Then, he cast a faint glance at Ozoma. Up to that moment, the Red Monkey Chieftain still seemed distant and disbelieving. By this, one could infer the impact Chichika Chieftain had in the hearts of the members of the various Canine Tribes.

"The warrior who killed Chichika wore an eagle helmet... was he a newly enlisted Prepetcha samurai from the Imperial Guards?"

Xiulote pondered, asking in a deep voice.

"Yes, your Highness. His name is Neikawaer, born in the Prepetcha Lake Region, a Surrendered Army from the Capital City during the western campaign. After joining the army camp for a year, due to his devout faith in the Chief Divine and outstanding battle technique, he was then included in the Imperial Guard Legion."

Bertade recalled briefly and recounted in detail. He commanded the Imperial Guard Legion and thus had an impression of well-known valiant warriors within the legion.

"A Prepetcha man, of Surrendered Army origin, with devout faith in deities, and sacrificed during the northern campaign..."

Hearing this, Xiulote's eyes brightened, and he nodded.

"Bertade, give a substantial reward to the family of this valiant warrior! When we return to the Kingdom, erect a statue for him in the Warrior's Grove below the Chief Divine Temple in the Capital City Akatla! And let someone write a poem about the northern campaign to be sung throughout the Kingdom!"

"Understood. Your Highness."

Bertade nodded, comprehending. The Warrior's Grove was a newly built construction in the Capital City, located under the Main Divine Temple of Akatla, dedicated to the commemoration of the valiant warriors who sacrificed themselves in war. The building had significant religious meaning, not only to encourage samurai to brave battles, but also to bond the spirits of the people of various parts of the Kingdom. Neikawaer would now enter the Warrior's Grove as the first Prepetcha samurai, to be revered by future generations, his legacy eternally tied with the nation.

After pondering for a moment, Xiulote spoke up to inquire.

"Before Chichika died, did he leave any last words?"

Bertade recalled with concentration for a long while before he spoke.

"The samurai said that Chichika died in combat. The battle at that time was very fierce; he kept shouting like a beast, inspiring the guards around him. After being struck in a vital spot, he instantly lost his strength; there was no time to speak. He just glanced toward the north and then fell backward on the ground... probably with reluctance in his heart, he died without waiting for reinforcements."

"The reinforcements from the Canine Descendants will never arrive. The scout reported that thousands from the Red Crow Tribe are fleeing to the East, and the other tribes in the valley are scattering."

Xiulote had already received the latest intelligence and sent out troops to pursue them. Now, three thousand Red Frog warriors and six thousand Otapan legions are all charging into Pamus Valley. They will split into three groups, advancing day and night—a group to march directly on Pamus City, another to block the eastern exit, and one more to block the northwest exit. Once all the exits are blocked, they will turn back and sweep through, subduing all the tribes in the valley.

"Before Chichika died, he should have left some last words."

The King pondered for a while, speaking with deep meaning.

"Indeed."

Bertade nodded his head.

"Your Highness, what do you think would be appropriate last words?"

Xiulote didn't immediately respond. He patted Ozoma on the shoulder.

"Ah! The holy God of Death, Great Chief!"

"Ozoma when there is a bloody change of leadership among the tribes of the wilderness, what would the victor do? What would he say?"

"A bloody change..."

Some distant, blood-stained memories flashed through Ozoma's mind, sending a shiver through his body.

"Great Chief, according to the customs of the wilderness, the victor will burn the former chieftain to ashes and scatter them with his own hands into the wind. He will pray to the Earth Mother Goddess, wishing the dead to be reborn as infants of the tribe, and for the future prosperity of the tribe!"

"...Such a simple custom."

Hearing this, Xiulote nodded slightly and instructed Bertade.

"Then, Chichika's last words are, 'The Cactus Tribe is also a tribe of the wilderness. What is there to grieve about dying at the hands of the great chief, the God of Death? Please scatter my body in the wind; I want to return to the embrace of the earth, to be reborn as an infant in the Cactus Tribe... And this position of wilderness king, I leave to you! Please treat the people of the Guajili Canine Descendants kindly, for we are born of the same root...'"

Bertade took out pen and paper, recording the King's words. After writing them down, he added.

"Your Highness, I will arrange for people to spread Chichika's last words among the surrendering Canine Descendants tribes."

"Very well! In a few days, I will hold a sacrificial ceremony in Pamus City. First, I will offer him to the Chief Divine, then chant the poetry of death, and finally process according to the customs of the wilderness!"

"I will obey your command, Your Highness."

The two shared a knowing smile. The military campaign to the north was basically over; now it was time to consider these political arrangements. If the Kingdom wanted to mobilize tens of thousands of Guajili Canine Descendants or even draft legions, brute force alone would not suffice.

Ozoma stood aside, his eyes wide with astonishment. It took him a while to come back to his senses.

"The God of Death Great Chief truly has the head of a fox on the body of a Jaguar, indeed much more cunning... ah, wise than the Great Chief Chichika, like a Wolf King."

With this thought, Ozoma's gaze flickered for a moment before he suddenly knelt to the ground.

"Great Chief!"

"Hmm?"

"The tribes in the valley have been confused by rumors and fear the reputation of the Great Chief, and thus they have fled every which way. By the witness of my ancestors! I am willing to toil for you and call the scattered tribes of the wilderness to surrender."

"Oh? You want to go to the valley and recruit the tribes for me?"

Xiulote's expression was serious as he scrutinized the kneeling Ozoma.

"Indeed! Great Chief, the Red Deer Chieftain, Masate, has always been familiar with me. Just give me one night, and by early morning tomorrow, he will come to pledge allegiance to the Great Chief!"

Ozoma knelt at the feet of the King, waiting like a loyal hound.

Xiulote watched Ozoma for a moment, then reached out and grabbed his hair. This was the ritual of accepting allegiance. Then the King spoke solemnly.

"Ozoma, I give you this opportunity—do not disappoint me! Tell the tribes in the valley that as long as they surrender willingly, they will not be sacrificed by the Kingdom. Although I bear the name of the God of Death, I do not relish in killing..."

As he said this, the King looked up, gazing into the distant skyline. The sun was sinking low, and night was falling upon the land. The northern campaign was nearing its end, yet the long journey of conquest seemed endless. To build a lasting Empire, one must cage the heroes from all seas and unite the different tribes under one banner. All the tribes of the world are to be the subjects of the King; and just as the moon shines clear and bright, so too does the heart of the King.

Chapter 668: The Conclusion of the Northern Expedition, the Forces of North America and Pamus City

The autumn wind rustled through the valley, turning the sparse trees of the wilderness yellow and bringing with it an air of chilling solemnity. After the Great Chief of Chichika fell in battle, the Guajili Tribes all lost their will to fight. In the days that followed, the Mexica legion marched swiftly northwards, pursuing the fleeing enemy and accepting surrenders.

Red Monkey Chieftain Ozoma did not break his word. He left and returned the next day with Red Deer Chieftain Masate and offered up Pamus City at the center of the valley.

Guided by the two Guajili chieftains, Xiulote led his personal army slowly northward, nearing a fertile valley that spanned dozens of miles. The Black Wolf's banner flew high, and thousands of Armored Warriors bore a stern visage. They passed harvested fields and tribes whose people lay prostrate in fear, eventually arriving at an ancient and rudimentary town.

The town wasn't small, yet it wasn't strictly a city. It resembled more a large tribal encampment. It was encircled by a single man-high wall and an additional fence. The low city walls weren't fully closed off, leaving a large gap to the west. By this opening wound a meandering river, with thousands of acres of farmland developed along its banks. The farmland had no channels, solely dependent on mountain streams, now full of yellowing straw.

"The defenses are rough, the terrain open, with no city walls to rely on, no wonder Chichika held the valley's entrance so dearly..."

Xiulote halted in front of the small town, observing it carefully for a long while before asking in a deep voice.

"Is this Pamus City?"

"Yes, respected God of Death Great Chief!"

Ozoma stood by his side, his expression respectful.

"It is the last city on the thousands of miles of wilderness in the north. Further north from here lies the Sattescas wilderness, where our Guajili people have lived for generations. The wilderness spans over two thousand miles, inhabited mostly by nomadic hunting and gathering tribes. To the northeast lies the tribes along the Bravo River, and to the northwest, those along the Concho River. Further north, I heard there are countless hunting tribes, only familiar to the elderly wilderness priests..."

Xiulote listened to Ozoma's narration and slowly nodded. He gazed silently to the north, where the brown mountains undulated and stretched, spotted with green cacti extending seemingly to the end of the world.

The Bravo River is later known as North America's fifth-longest river, the Grande River (Rio Grande), originating from the Colorado Mountains and stretching over three thousand kilometers. The upper reaches of the river pass through New Mexico, while its two thousand kilometers downstream serve as a natural border between America and Mexico. Along its banks are many hunting-gathering tribes, later collectively known in history as the Southwest Native American tribes.

Among them, many tribes were recorded in history for resisting Yankee expansion and persist through to modern times. The river's upper streams housed the Navajo near the Great Basin, the valiant Apache, and the Mescalero in the mountain forests; downstream resided the Toboso who resembled the Canine Descendants, the Lipan at the boundaries of the Great Plains, and the Coahuiltec by the Caribbean Sea.

The tribes along the river's upper streams mostly relied on hunting for survival, known for their nimbleness and fierceness. The further down the river one traveled, the higher the proportion of gathering tribes became, and by the Caribbean coast, nearly all were agricultural tribes, generally more docile in temperament.

The western Concho River is a southwestern tributary of the upper Grande River. It also housed countless hunting tribes. The Opata, Pima, Tarahumar, Jumano, and the Concho in close proximity to the eight Canine Descendant tribes...

Thinking of this, Xiulote slightly bowed his head. Too many North American Indian tribes perished under the cruel expansion of Yankee settlers. Millions of native ethnic groups were forcibly relocated,

exterminated, and even erased without a trace by history's scribes. Having come here now, as a king among the natives, he was determined to change all this, no matter how long it took!

In this era, to traverse the endless forests, prairies, and deserts deep into the wild, untamed North American continent, it was impractical to rely on tough land routes. Only three great rivers provided a clear path: the northern Great River, Saint Lawrence River, and the Great Lakes region, the central southern long river, Mississippi River basin, and the southwestern long river, Grande River basin.

"Only by relying on these three great rivers can one connect with the North American Indian tribes, spread religious beliefs, establish trade routes, and even build relations of subjugation to oppose the continuous western colonizers. But the Saint Lawrence River is too remote, the Mississippi River too difficult, leaving only the Grande River right before us."

Xiulote's thoughts soared into the distance, envisioning the epochs long gone. One who does not plan for the eternity is not adequate to plan a moment; those who do not consider the whole scenario cannot plan a single area. For this vast continent, he harbored too many aspirations, too many plans, too many ambitions... Yet, that would be far in the future.

Every journey begins with a single step. For now, this modest Pamus City marked the northernmost reach of the Black Wolf's royal banner in this campaign.

Thousands of trusted aides first entered the city to establish defenses. Following that, Bertade emerged from the city, nodding to indicate safety, and then the Black Wolf's royal banner moved again.

Xiulote entered the city, encountering low-thatched houses and extensive shelters. In the corners of the city were scattered farmlands and domesticated turkeys. Along the muddy roads, thousands of the Canine Descendants Tribes kneeled, welcoming the arrival of the God of Death Great Chief. The Great Chief walked to the city's center before encountering the first stone building, a small and dilapidated temple.

In front of the temple was a wide square, at the center of which stood a newly built wilderness sacrificial altar. Various red flags inserted below the altar, surrounded by piles of cattle skulls and abstract, bizarre wooden carvings.

"This is the grand altar constructed by the orders of Zuma Priest. It was originally prepared for the sacred wilderness grand sacrifice, to offer all agricultural slaves and captives."

Ozoma kept an eye on the Great Chief's expression, timely explaining.

Xiulote examined the altar's structure and slightly nodded. Scouts had already reported back the happenings within the city days earlier.

"Good! This altar fits the wilderness traditions, as long as the Chief Divine's emblem is added, it can serve as the altar for the Chief Divine's grand sacrifice. Chichika's bustling activity not only constructed an altar for themselves but also saved me a lot of effort."

The King smiled, then looked around and commanded loudly.

"Place the Chief Divine's banner on the altar! Then adorn it with the 'gemstones' produced by the Kingdom. War Priests should prepare the Sacred Fire and the Blood Wine in advance, I want to combine the ceremony of religious conversion with the grand sacrificial rite!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise the Supreme High Priest of the Divine Revelation!"

The Priests accompanying the army bowed in response and immediately began preparations. Ever since the Kingdom began to mass-produce 'gemstones', the ritual ceremonies had been much simplified. The Priesthood no longer needed to carry heavy gold and silver utensils, and could instead use hundreds of pounds of 'gemstones' as substitutes. There were so many Kingdom-fired 'gemstones' that they couldn't be sold off all at once and were hence used in sacrificial ceremonies and noble burials.

"Where are the agricultural slaves and captives in the city now? Take me to them!"

After arranging everything, Xiulote looked towards Ozoma again. The Red Monkey Chieftain bowed his head and continued to lead the way. Soon, in a corner of the city, a lifeless camp appeared before everyone.

"Great Chief, here are the agricultural slaves and captives from various tribes, totaling about six thousand. They were originally prepared as sacrifices, but were not dealt with in time when the tribes dispersed..."

Ozoma pointed nervously towards the camp, his expression partly anxious.

Outside the camp, hundreds of Canine Warriors guarded, now casting aside their weapons and kneeling on the ground. Through the fence, Xiulote gazed at the thousands of people inside the camp. Their expressions were numb, their clothes ragged, terribly emaciated. The Canine leaders merely shouted a few commands, and they cowered on the ground, too afraid to look at the Armored Warriors.

Tens of thousands of Otomi had settled in the valleys of Pamus, and now only these six thousand able-bodied men and women remained. Beyond the more extensive valley wilderness, the fields had long been abandoned, and the villages lay completely silent.

"Conquer the city through war, fill the city with corpses... Pamus City has been cleansed,"

Xiulote shook his head. Most of the Otomi nobility in the valley were dead, and the rest would be reassigned around Red Fox Valley. Pamus City would be designated as a direct territory of the Kingdom, and the agricultural slaves and captives would be reinstated as citizens to toil for the Kingdom. As for the few Otomi nobles among the captives, the Kingdom would partially recognize their status and reassign them elsewhere.

Thinking this, the King glanced at Ozoma and spoke in a deep voice.

"I said that the surrendered Guajili tribes will not be sacrificed."

Hearing this, Ozoma finally breathed a sigh of relief. As long as the Kingdom did not seek retribution for the massacres of the Guajili tribes, everyone could surrender without any psychological burden, as loyalty was the same to whom it was pledged. The alliance to the south was not only wealthy and powerful but also far away. Waiting for the Mexica legion to move south, the situation in the Northern Land was still not...

"However, the surrendered Guajili tribes will be gathered and moved south in groups, crossing the Grande River and relocating to the hinterlands of the Kingdom! There lies more fertile land and plenty of water sources. As long as you submit to the Kingdom, all will be my citizens, and I will treat everyone equally!"

The King's words came again. The two Guajili Chieftains exchanged looks, their hearts chilled.

"Great Chief, our Guajili tribes have lived on the wilderness for generations, this is our root! Migrating south beyond the Great River..."

Ozoma's words abruptly stopped as Xiulote calmly turned his gaze towards him. His expression unchanging, he looked at the two men for a while before speaking indisputably.

"The Guajili tribes must migrate! The faith of the Chief Divine must be spread! Go, tell your tribes to prepare and welcome the ceremony of conversion in a few days!"

"... I will obey your command, my Wolf King."

Ozoma bowed to the ground momentarily, finally responding quietly. Masate's expression changed for a long time before he too firmly bowed to the ground.

"You may leave now!"

Xiulote waved his hand, and the two Chieftains left with their heads lowered. He then turned to his side, where the Head Warrior's expression was serene, his right hand still gripping the War Club.

"Bertade, I will rest in the city tonight. Organize the city's food supplies, withdraw some Priests and Warriors to pacify the agricultural slaves and captives in the camp. Dispatch envoys to have each tribe's leader come to pay homage to the Royal Banner!"

The Head Warrior nodded and strode off to arrange everything. Under the leadership of the two Great Chieftains, the Guajili tribes gradually surrendered and camped outside Pamus City. At this moment, the

Allied Forces from the south stationed near the small city numbered over ten thousand, with about twenty thousand surrendered Canine Descendants Tribes, all of whom needed to be closely monitored.

The setting sun slowly descended, casting its afterglow over the vast land. The Pamus Valley was narrow and vast, with the distant sounds of slaughter still echoing from the east and west valley mouths, like the final notes of the northern conquest.

A red falcon spread its wings, soaring above the mountains. It glanced at the tribespeople fleeing in panic, then at the Warriors pursuing and surrounding them, and without turning back, it flew towards the northeast horizon. It knew that there lay more food, more tribes, and more rivers flowing into the boundless Great Lake.

Chapter 669: The Conclusion of the Northern Expedition, Sacrificial Rite Ceremony, Follow-ups, and the Journey Home

The Sacred Fire burned brightly, and the green smoke of the sacrificial rite rose from the plaza, bringing with it the scent of divinity. The altar stood tall, the Priest's chant echoed through the valley, like the whisper of the spirits.

"...The sun rises over the wilderness, Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli ascends to the utmost high! He is almighty, omnipotent. He controls the divine realms, reigns over all the Tribes, and also rules over the citizens of the wilderness!... Under the gaze of the Chief Divine, the holy northern conquest achieved a perfect victory!"

Xiulote, dressed in elaborate Ceremonial Dress, stood at the highest point of the altar. He held aloft the Emerald Divine Staff, arms outstretched, praying to the Chief Divine.

The plaza was filled with solemnity. Below the altar and the sacrificial platform, there were hundreds of chanting Priests, thousands of stern Samurai, and tens of thousands of subjugated members of the Guajili Tribe. At this moment, countless people knelt, bathed in the light of the Chief Divine, prostrating themselves at the feet of the King, offering their initial submission.

"O highest Chief Divine! To thank You for Your protection, I offer You the most noble of Sacrifices. He is the chief cause of the southern invasion, and a Divine Descendant from the northern wilderness! He flows with divine blood, slain by the legion of the Chief Divine..."

The singing of Xiulote grew increasingly intense, and the accompaniment of the Priesthood pierced the skies. Suddenly, the Priest King waved the Divine Staff, and the Eight-Gate Wooden Cannons burst forth with a thunderous boom. The members of the Guajili Tribe below showed faces of horror, which then transformed into deep awe. In the eyes of tens of thousands, the deceased body of Chichika, dressed in a Wolf Robe and lying on a spice-strewn stretcher, was carried onto the altar by four Priests.

Xiulote's face was solemn, as if he possessed Divinity. He held his breath in secret, chanted two more lines, then cast the body of Chichika into the Sacred Fire. Afterwards, he prayed once again to the Chief Divine, offering the death of the Coyote, the peace of the deer, and the abundance of river fish. For these two Coyotes and the deer, thousands of Samurai had toiled for a day to capture them from the mountains in the east.

"Praise the Chief Divine, for You grant us long lives! Praise the Chief Divine, for You give us peace after death! Praise the Chief Divine, for You bestow upon us the bounty of the fields... and also the victory of the northern conquest!"

The chanting of the Chief God Priest resonated through the small city, accompanied by a strange dance, as mysterious as the rituals of the wilderness Priests. The Chieftains of each Tribe prostrated themselves at the forefront of the plaza, their faces filled with awe. Behind them, huddled masses crowded together like an army of ants.

"Ozoma, isn't the Great Chief of the God of Death an incarnation of the God of Death himself? Why does he keep singing praises to this Chief Divine, Sun God, and War God?"

The Chieftain Masate of the Red Deer Tribe knelt on the ground. Although his face showed reverence, it did not seem to affect his low murmuring.

"Shush! Dumb deer, what are you pondering over?"

The Red Monkey Chieftain Ozoma replied devoutly, also in a low voice.

"Isn't it simple? The Chief Divine is the greatest, the God of Death comes second. The Great Chief of the God of Death has strong Mana, but he is young, not the Great Chief of the southern Alliance. Above him, there's a Great Great Chieftain, an incarnation of the Chief Divine. When the Great Great Chieftain dies, the Great Chief of the God of Death will become the Great Chief of the Chief Divine, right?"

"Ah, so it's changeable? That just means it depends on who has higher Mana, who has stronger power..."

"Of course! Strong power naturally means the blessing of the spirits... Right now, the Great Chief of the God of Death is the strongest, so we all listen to him..."

The low whispers dissipated in the divine smoke and then fell silent. For the Chieftains of the wilderness, revering the spirits was necessary, but once that was done, they could go about their usual affairs. To embed the faith of the Chief Divine into their hearts would require a long period of acculturation.

"The Divine has descended, watching over His children! Offer up your devotion, surrender your souls to the Chief Divine!"

Soon, several high-pitched chants arose. The Priests poured dozens of pounds of Sulfur into a few fire pits, and blue flames leaped up. Seeing this mystical Spell, the members of the Guajili Tribe immediately became chaotic, their cries mingled with fear.

However, in the presence of the thousands of elite Samurai, they had no choice. Xiulote surveyed the dense crowd, took a deep breath, and roared with a loud voice.

"Children of the Chief Divine! Drink the Blood Wine to the last drop, offer your hair, convert to the Chief Divine, and illuminate His glory!"

The thumping of drums rose in an instant, followed by the high songs of the Chief God Priest and the War Dance of the Mexica Samurai! The members of the Guajili Tribe, by the thousands, stepped forward in groups to receive the baptism from the Priests. The red-haired warriors of the Tribes, always fearless of death, seeing War as homecoming, now betrayed deep fear as their red hair turned to green smoke and flew into the sky of the Divine Kingdom of Mexica.

Sakate and Ozoma were no exceptions. The two Chieftains of the Canine Descendants offered their hair, drank the Blood Wine, and were led to the edge of the altar. They looked at each other, for the first time seeing real unease in each other's eyes. In this era, rituals of deities and spirits always held tangible restraints in people's hearts. And in the wilderness, where the reach of Kingly power waned, only the power of the Divine still wielded might.

Xiulote stood solemnly on the high platform, watching over the crowd before him. After the conversion ritual began, he didn't need to act personally, he merely needed to be a statue of Divinity. With this free time, he lowered his gaze, contemplating the arrangements after the northern conquest.

The three armies had been chasing for seven or eight days, sweeping clean each Tribe in the valley. The eastern army even caught up to the tail of more than three thousand Red Crow warriors, biting off several hundred strong Canine Descendants. Later, under the lead of the Red Crow Chieftain, over a hundred red-haired Hunters fought to their deaths to cover the retreat of their Tribe, helping the large group onto bamboo rafts and small boats. It wasn't until more than two thousand Tribesmen had headed east along the Tampen River, and the fleeing elite used the cover of night to escape, that the pursuing legions finally returned.

Chapter 670: The Conclusion of the Northern Expedition, Sacrificial Rite Ceremony, Follow-ups, and the Journey Home_2

The northern campaign came to a close; all was settled. The Red Dog, Red Stork, and Red Salamander tribes were completely erased—the chieftains of the Red Dog and Red Stork died in battle, while the chieftain of the Red Salamander vanished without a trace. The Red Deer and Red Monkey tribes suffered heavy losses and surrendered to the Alliance. Only the Red Crow Tribe rose unexpectedly, taking thousands of their tribe members in a hurried escape eastward, their destination unknown.

Before the northern campaign, there were roughly sixty to seventy thousand individuals in the several Canine Descendant tribes to the east. Throughout months of campaigning, ten thousand able-bodied Canine Descendants died or went missing, over ten thousand migrated eastwards, and three to four thousand of the elderly and weak fled into the northwestern wilderness. The remaining forty thousand Canine Descendants all surrendered to the Allied Forces. At this moment, they knelt at the feet of the King, converted to the worship of the Chief Divine, and underwent baptism by the priests.

After capturing the valley, Xiulote now had forty thousand more mouths to feed. The food seized in Pamus City was limited and could not sustain the army's prolonged encampment. After today's completion of the sacrificial rites, within three days, the first batch of over ten thousand Canine Descendants would start their migration southward, embarking on a journey of over seven hundred miles.

With this, the northern campaign could be declared over. The three legions mobilized between June and July, set out in early August, captured the valley in early November, and offered the Red Dog leader as a sacrifice. Thousands from the Red Fox Tribe fled westward, tens of thousands from the Red Crow Tribe fled eastward, with the Red Dog, Red Stork, Red Salamander tribes all annihilated, the Red Frog, Red

Cat, Red Monkey, Red Deer tribes surrendered... Each tribe's chieftains took the stage in turn, but their countless schemes and ambitions vanished in the wind, leaving a clean, vast expanse of white!

Of the more than one hundred thousand Canine Descendants who migrated southward, over twenty thousand died or were wounded, another twenty thousand scattered. The remaining over sixty thousand were captured and subdued by the Alliance, soon to become citizens of the Kingdom.

"Over sixty thousand, most of them strong men and women, brave and adept in battle—a fine addition to our forces!"

Thinking of this, Xiulote's face lit up with a smile. After several battles with the Canine Descendants, he revised his original plan. Using these fierce Guajili Tribe members merely as agricultural slaves would have been a waste. He planned to disband and reorganize the various tribes into fifteen or sixteen battle groups, each with four thousand people, and settle them in Rivermouth County, the least populated area. Subsequently, from the sixty thousand tribal members, a Guajili Legion would be formed, comprising two battle groups of three thousand each, according to the King's promise, to be overseen by the Red Frog and Red Monkey Chieftains. Of course, this legion must first faithfully convert to the worship of the Chief Divine, accept the management of the War Priests, and integrate a sufficient number of Kingdom officers.

Xiulote glanced at the chieftains prostrated on the ground, then shifted his gaze to the Otomi Nobility from the three states standing guard.

At the start of the northern campaign, the three Otomi states had mobilized a total of sixteen thousand Samurai, plus ten to twenty thousand Militia maintaining the supply lines. The Mexica legion had deployed eight thousand elite soldiers, six thousand of which were Imperial Guard Warriors, and two thousand Longbow Militia. At the end of the campaign, the Pamus legion had dissolved, with the remaining thousand joining the Mexica legion. The other two states had slightly over ten thousand Samurai left.

Altogether, the three Otomi states suffered casualties of five thousand Samurai, plus several thousand Militia responsible for transportation. After replenishing the Otomi Warriors and Canine Descendant prisoners, the Mexica legion was back to its full strength of eight thousand. However, such a prolonged campaign lasted only three months and had exhausted the granaries of both the three Otomi states and the Rivermouth County of the Kingdom. Given the logistical reality, the southern Allied Forces could no longer advance further.

First came the Canine Descendants' invasion from the south, followed by the Allied Forces' campaign to the north. The losses for the Otomi Nobility were devastating, and those remaining were deliberately integrated. Through careful planning along the way, the Kingdom was at last able to exert influence, tentatively transforming the priests of the Primordial God and gaining preliminary control over the three Otomi states.

To put it in one sentence, the Otomi states had finally transitioned from an unfaithful vassal of the Alliance to a loyal lineage under the Kingdom's dominion.

After getting a tentative hold on the three states, the population of each state was recorded. Between the start and the end of the northern campaign, the population of Otapan State in the south remained around two hundred thousand, mostly unchanged. The Guajili State to the west dropped from nearly two hundred thousand to about one hundred and fifty thousand. The Pamus State to the north suffered the most, plummeting from one hundred fifty to one hundred sixty thousand to only sixty thousand, a mere fraction of its original number. In total, the Otomi population across the three states dwindled to just over four hundred thousand. Barely years ago, including Xilotepec State, the Otomi people numbered a million!

"Cruel war cleanses everything, destroys old modes of production, and gives birth to new classes of productive forces... I will foster them with my own hands!"

Xiulote opened his eyes, and a flash of fire sparked within them. Looking back, the main achievements of the northern campaign were threefold. First was the capture of tens of thousands of Canine Descendant members, second was the subjugation of the three Otomi states, and third was securing a stable outpost in the wilderness, Pamus City.

Amid the priests' chanting songs, he pondered the follow-up arrangements for the three states.

"Pamus State will continue to be autonomously governed by the local Nobility, but Pamus City will be directly controlled by the Alliance, with Balamo serving as City Lord. Six thousand Agricultural Slaves and prisoners of war regaining their freedom will become the most valuable Wealth of Pamus City. Hmm, leave Balamo five hundred Mexica warriors, a thousand Pamus warriors, and also recruit five hundred from among the prisoners. That makes two thousand warriors, sufficient to defend Pamus City."

Following the campaign, the once-populous one hundred thousand Guajili Canine Descendants were swept away. In two generations, none of the Guajili Tribes would be capable of invading from the south. However, as different Tribes migrated across the Wilderness, chasing game and water sources, the vast

void left by the Guajili people would likely be discovered soon by the people further north—the Toboso, the Jumano, or even the Concho—and they would gradually migrate southward.