

Civilization 71

Chapter 71 Surrender

September marked the end of the rainy season, with sporadic raindrops and overcast skies. Under the sky lay the solid wooden fort and, within and without, tens of thousands of Mexica samurai.

Last September, the young man had followed King Tizoc's army and departed from here. This September, he returned with the army of Prince Aweit. Time had hurried by, life like a cycle of reincarnation, with only the hearts of the samurai changing.

Standing outside the main camp, Xiulote carefully observed the fort's defenses. The layouts of the Mexica camps were always similar.

The outermost perimeter was a dense palisade. Within the range of stones and arrows, it was the first defensive line to obstruct enemies.

Further inside was the stockade wall, built from logs. The height and thickness of the stockade determined the camp's maximum defense capability. Here, the walls were just over two meters high and less than one meter thick, but that was enough to form a defensive advantage, delivering a sufficient penalty to the attacker's stamina and diminishing their assault. At this moment, all damaged areas of the wall had been repaired.

Upon the wall stood dense ranks of warriors, dressed neatly in armor and carrying weapons and shields, probably ever-vigilant against the Otomi people. Between them was a considerable number of militia.

To Xiulote's surprise, even the militia were armed as best as possible. They were essentially all equipped with shields, some holding the samurai's war club, others wearing ill-fitting, damaged leather armor. Upon closer inspection of the patterns on the armor, it was actually in the style of the Otomi.

The young man couldn't help but nod in approval, his expression grave, "The commander here is quite capable; a direct assault would incur heavy losses."

As the plain-clothed warrior on the wall shouted out commands, the watchtower guards stopped at the sound. Although the warriors near the wall were somewhat restless, with some issuing questioning outbursts, their actions were still in compliance with orders.

Xiulote continued to observe, identifying the plain-clothed warrior's back banner, "That's the flag of a legion-level commander. The warriors in the camp are all under his command; it's very likely Commander-in-Chief Kuluka himself."

Aweit nodded, he did not speak but simply waited for the response from the city battlements.

The plain-clothed warrior stood behind the watchtower above the palisade, first issuing a few commands, mobilizing the camp's defending forces. Then he carefully concealed his form, peeping through gaps in the watchtower out towards the camp, eyeing the banners of the grand army.

Before long, a troop of warriors climbed onto the wall, and toward the grand army outside the camp, they shouted in unison, "Is the army outside the reinforcements from Tenochtitlan? Please Commander Kotoko, step forward to talk. Please Commander Kotoko, step forward to talk!"

Xiulote glanced at Aweit.

The mentor pondered for a moment, then waved his hand, sending Stanley away. Shortly after, Kotoko was escorted over. Elite warriors dressed him in the commander's regalia, then firmly "escorted" him to their side.

"Order the gates open," Aweit's gaze sharpened as he eyed Kotoko's trembling body. "You are the true Third Level noble of the Alliance. Otherwise..."

Hearing this, the bear-like Stanley stretched out his thick and powerful hand, gently encircling Kotoko's neck, as if touching a delicate, fragile jade artifact. Two days ago, it was these hands that effortlessly snapped Kotoko's back banner.

Kotoko immediately jolted as if electrocuted, his slightly overweight body quaking like a sieve. His strength drained from him, he was almost carried by the warriors to a spot less than a hundred meters from the wall. His command banner was also held high by the warriors.

"I am the commander of the reinforcements, Kotoko!" His trembling voice was overly shrill and off-key.

Looking at the numerous warriors on the wall, Great Noble Kotoko shuddered, seemingly finding some strength. Then, his face filled with emotion, he opened his mouth, intending to shout loudly, to alert the fort to something.

Just then, Stanley's large hand timely and gently landed on the back of Kotoko's neck once more.

Some strength rapidly left him, Kotoko opened his mouth to speak, yet unable to utter a word, as if performing in a silent pantomime, before tens of thousands of warriors watching from the camp.

Stanley was somewhat anxious, trying to keep his expression calm, the hand at the nape applying slight pressure. Then he opened his mouth, whispering quietly, "Let them open the gate!"

Kotoko trembled again but remained speechless. At this moment, he lacked the courage to resist and warn the fortress, nor did he have the courage to betray and call for the opening of the camp's gates.

He simply stood there, dumbly watching the city head, like a puppet that had been drained of all vitality, turning into both a mute and a deaf.

Xiulote couldn't help but shake his head. Aweit, too, furrowed his brow.

The clamorous warriors gradually grew quiet, watching the scene before them. The fort was embraced by an odd silence. Soon, a tense atmosphere began to spread inside and outside the camp, with warriors nervously touching the weapons on their backs.

Aweit finally shook his head. With a stern expression, he gave the command, and the twenty thousand Samurai outside the camp unfolded in sequence, forming a battle formation and gradually surrounding the Xilotepec camp.

Xiulote continued to observe for a moment and noticed that the warriors inside the fortress had not yet laid down their arms, their faces bearing traces of confusion and hesitation.

The youth then advised, "Aweit, why not put on the Divine Descendant King's sacred attire, take up the Divine Staff, and try to persuade them to surrender one more time at the camp? Even if it doesn't work, it might shake the resolve of those inside the camp and facilitate our upcoming assault."

Aweit hesitated for a moment, then decided to take a risk. After all, there were no longbows on the city walls, only simple bows with limited power. He donned the Beast Helmet and Red Armor, tightly clutching the ornate Feather Shield in his left hand and raising the gemstone-encrusted Divine Staff high with his right hand, approaching the fortress gate under the heavy shield cover of over a hundred Jaguar warriors.

"Open the gates quickly, the new King stands here!"

"King Tizoc has been attacked in Otapan and was brutally killed by the treacherous Otomi! The esteemed younger brother has succeeded to the throne in Tenochtitlan and has become the most sacred Tratuani!"

Xiulote and Acap followed on either side. They wore Priest robes convincing enough to instill belief, and in the unique solemn chant of the Priests, they called out to those atop the city walls.

The clear, archaic voices resounded throughout the camp, delivering the staggering news.

Like deer faced with a Jaguar, the camp was instantaneously abuzz. The warriors on the palisades whispered to one another in shock, gazing down towards the city base. Their gazes converged on the majestic and solemn Aweit, and on the dazzling gemstone Divine Staff, with bursts of astonished cries.

The simple-looking warriors behind the palisade walls also peeked out, scrutinizing Aweit dressed as the King. He glanced at the coyote-clad youth, looking around at the twenty thousand warriors encircling the camp, before barking angrily at those nearby.

"The King is not dead, you foolish turkeys! Those below are rebels, the enemy!"

Xiulote's eyelids twitched. He looked up at the simple warrior on the wall, who was stamping his feet, and suddenly took a keen interest in him.

The standoff between those above and below the wall continued, with the warriors finally taking down their shields and weapons, and a grim atmosphere of killing intent spread. Years of training brought about an automatic muscular response. Regardless of their willingness, despite any confusion, the Mexica warriors were ready for combat. The battle was on the verge of erupting.

Aweit's brows furrowed deeply.

He watched the palisade-top warrior who was shouting loudly, and a flash of coldness went through his eyes. Then he slightly turned to the youth beside him, "Shoot him!"

Xiulote nodded. He gestured to Bertade nearby, then pointed towards the command flag on the wall.

Bertade obeyed the order with a salute. He summoned the best Archers from within the Longbow Guards, and fifty longbows were simultaneously aimed at the simple warrior on top of the palisade. Soon, the bowstrings were drawn, producing a heavy humming sound.

As soon as the simple warrior on the wall saw the Archers' movements, he agilely leaped backward like a wary monkey. Once again, he hid behind the sturdy Watchtower, appearing to have been on guard all along.

The longbows thundered, and the arrows flew like lightning. Dozens of Feathered Arrows arrived in a flash, sinking deep into the position where the simple warrior had just stood. The Archers were only seventy to eighty steps away from the wall, the perfect distance to achieve maximum flat-shooting power, with the Armor-Piercing copper arrowheads fully embedded in the wall, penetrating more than an inch into the wood.

Xiulote saw a hand quickly reach out from behind the Watchtower, feeling the length at which the arrow penetrated the wood, tugging at an arrow without pulling it free, and then quickly withdrawing it, like a monkey stealing peaches.

The youth couldn't help but laugh.

Aweit didn't laugh. He raised his Divine Staff and swung it forward forcefully, issuing the command to attack.

Suddenly, the drums of assault were being beaten. The drum beats were urgent and low, accompanied by the terrifying roars of the Jaguar warriors. The twenty thousand Samurai raised their weapons, prepared to launch an assault and breach the walls ahead.

However, at this critical moment, a shrill sound of a conch horn rang out from within the encampment, and the gates suddenly opened.

Xiulote saw that same plainly dressed warrior again. He wore Leather Armor, was stooped over, with the command flag on his back, carrying a heavy shield, stepping out under the protection of a dozen shield-bearing warriors.

"We surrender!" The plainly dressed warrior emerged from the gate, immediately took off the command flag from his back, and threw it onto the ground. Then, in front of everyone, he knelt down, still not forgetting to keep his heavy shield raised in front of him.

Witnessing this scene, the youth was left speechless.