

## Civilization 72

### Chapter 72: Speeches and Trials

The sky was overcast past noon, casting a heavy mood.

However, Aweit was not affected by the weather. He stood majestically outside the camp, looking at the open gates and the commander who had surrendered, a slight curve lifting the corners of his mouth.

He commanded authoritatively, disregarding the prostrated commander, and ordered his trusted aides to take him into custody. Then, thousands of Jaguar warriors, fully armed alongside tens of thousands of warriors, entered through the gates. They secured the gates and quickly occupied strategic points in the camp, finally disarming the camp warriors and gathering them together.

The legion's commander had surrendered, the legion's banner had fallen, the superior force of fellow warriors had entered the camp, the King's banner had appeared!

The eight thousand warriors in the camp, already wavering, now offered no resistance. They surrendered directly to the ceremonial regalia of Tratuoani and the Divine Staff of Montezuma. The march of battle halted in the final moment, and the camp changed hands in peace.

Only after confirming that the army had entirely taken control of the Xilotepec camp did Aweit enter, his spirits high.

He stood atop the high watchtower, loudly promising the captured warriors:

"...I forgive your crimes of rebellion against the new King because you did not know of the change in rulership before. You have earned great merit in guarding against the Otomi people! I will generously reward those warriors who have shown bravery in the past months: the outstanding thousand warriors will be granted cotton and cocoa, the most excellent hundred veteran warriors will become military nobility, and the most exceptional ten nobles will be granted land in Chinampa!..."

The mood among the captives quickly settled down during the speech.

In the end, Aweit vowed passionately, "I will end the war within a month, and let all the warriors go home! Go home, back to the beautiful Lake Capital City! Back to the beautiful Mexica lands!"

With the cries of going home, the camp erupted into booming cheers. Whether it was the captured eight-thousand-strong legion, the following twenty thousand warriors, or even the militia within the camp, everyone cheered warmly and embraced each other.

Soon, under deliberate guidance, the resounding cheers in the camp turned into a deafening slogan, "Go home! Go home! Follow the Great Tlatoani Aweit! Go home! Go home! Follow the Great Tlatoani Aweit!"

Xiulote smiled lightly, happily watching the boiling camp. The speech was his proposal.

In the recent standoff, the young man had clearly seen that both the army outside the camp and the guards inside were very low in morale.

The war had been ongoing for nearly a year and a half. With the Otomi assaults and the failure of Otapan's siege, the warriors saw no hope of victory.

Their hearts were already filled with the longing to go home. Proposing to retreat and end the war could capture the warriors' hearts most quickly and fully, amassing the most energy for the final battle!

In the Nava language, Tlatoani is a title for King, meaning "he who speaks." Great Tlatoani means "he who speaks greatly." The Great Tlatoani can be understood as "great monarch" or the Great Chief of the Alliance, a rank above Tlatoani, similar to how a son of Heaven ranks above feudal lords.

Promoting this concept was, of course, not arrogantly self-appointing as the common ruler of Mexican tribes. It was merely necessary psychological preparation for the upcoming military campaign against Tizoc.

Xiulote looked around the camp with evident self-satisfaction at the boiling morale of the warriors and militia. Then, he noticed the simply dressed warrior being kept in the corner. With a thoughtful expression, the young man carefully observed the simple warrior's features.

The warrior looked to be in his early thirties, not very old. He had high cheekbones, a pointed chin, a broad forehead, and a somewhat thin face that made him resemble a monkey, far from the superior genes of the Great Nobility like Ctokoc, who was imposing in appearance.

His face bore the signs of hardship, and his simple temperament was like that of a farmer, clearly not of noble birth. His drooping eyebrows added a touch of sorrow to his expression. Only his bright, intelligent eyes, twinkling with agility and wisdom, stood out.

At that moment, the simply dressed warrior was listening intently to Aweit's speech, his expression changing rapidly with the content, evidently understanding deeply. Finally, upon hearing everyone's cheers, he could no longer hold back a sigh, and simply lay flat on the ground, his face against the dirt, completely devoid of a warrior's dignity.

Xiulote watched quietly, contemplating.

After the speech ended, Aweit proceeded to the main tent of the camp surrounded by his generals. Although it seemed that the warriors' loyalty had returned, the necessary precautions were still indispensable.

First, both the company and legion-level officers were gathered and detained, regardless of whether they were direct descendants of Tizoc. Next, Aweit allocated a portion of the supplies from logistics to reward the distinguished warriors and military nobility, continuing to win over their loyalty. Finally, he dispatched trustworthy family officers to integrate into various companies as key chiliarchs.

Xiulote also stood by, learning how to manage and organize a large army.

Only after settling the most crucial military affairs and securing tight control over the army did Aweit finally breathe a sigh of relief. It was then that he remembered something and whispered an order, "Bring the surrendered commander here!"

Soon, the simply dressed warrior, head bowed, was brought in by two robust Jaguar warriors. Xiulote then realized that the warrior had a slightly thin frame and was not very tall, likely due to inadequate nutrition during childhood.

Aweit was still in his majestic royal attire. He lightly tapped the end of his Divine Staff against a stone seat, producing a clear and unique ring.

The elite warriors quickly quieted down. Everyone's gaze then fell on the simply dressed warrior.

The plain-dressed Samurai lifted his head slightly, then respectfully knelt on the ground and performed a ritual greeting, "Military Nobility Kuluka greets His Highness, the esteemed Prince, wishing you great fortune in war."

Aweit remained expressionless, offering no response to Kuluka's words. He did not set up any sort of intimidation either, for to him, dealing with a commoner-born ordinary Military Noble like this involved nothing more than dragging him out and executing him if necessary, which would not affect the bigger picture at all.

Xiulote was well aware that at that moment, Kuluka's life hung by a thread in Aweit's mind, making excessive formalities utterly meaningless.

"When you first saw the Commander's banner of Ktotoc, why did you not open the gates?" Aweit asked directly, his handsome face filled with divine majesty and indifference.

"I noticed that the number of warriors was incorrect. Although both groups were around twenty thousand in size, Ktotoc couldn't possibly have that many warriors, including even a thousand from the elite Jaguar Warrior Brigade." Kuluka, clearly aware of his own predicament, answered respectfully and honestly.

"Why were you sure that Tizoc wasn't dead? Did he send you a Messenger?" the "Divine" on the stone throne continued questioning.

"I did not receive a Messenger from King Tizoc." Kuluka used the corner of his eye to sneak a glance at Aweit's expression, but could discern nothing.

He could only continue answering cautiously, "However, if King Tizoc had passed away, Your respected Highness would officially inherit the throne. You could simply send a Commander to the large camp at Xilotepec, such as Lord Ktotoc, to take over the command of the army, without needing to degrade yourself by coming here in person."

"Even if you did come in person, there would be no need to initially fly the banner of Ktotoc. You could have directly displayed the Royal Banner. As long as there was certain news of King Tizoc, and with the endorsement of the Priesthood, your position would be unshakeable."

"But you chose to hide amidst Lord Ktotoc's troops, and Lord Ktotoc's actions were quite strange, which only proves one thing."

"What thing?" Aweit's voice fluctuated slightly.

Xiulote also curiously paid attention. As expected, Kuluka was indeed clever.

"You are an enemy... an adversary, not our ally, intending to take over the large camp at Xilotepec. The purpose of taking here must be to contend against the living King Tizoc," Kuluka dared to sneak another look forward.

Aweit slightly narrowed his eyes, like a Jaguar about to pounce.

"So you are loyal to Tizoc, thinking I am a rebel?" came the flat voice, void of any emotion.

Kuluka, frightened, thudded down on the ground, his head pressing tightly against the surface. "No, I am just a commoner-born Military Noble, never having received King Tizoc's favor. That I could temporarily command the army was solely due to the trust and recognition of my comrades. Regarding the Royal Family's hierarchy, someone as lowly as I am has no right to comment."

Aweit said nothing, just letting Kuluka lie prostrate on the ground. A long time passed, sweat oozing from Kuluka's forehead, before he finally asked in a deep voice.

"Kuluka, why did you initially refuse to open the gates, and then later choose to surrender?"

This time, Kuluka dared not sneak a glance forward. He continued to respond while prostrated: "Initially, I had some ignorant confidence. I thought that facing twenty thousand warriors, with my abilities and relying on the fortifications, I could still hold the large camp.

But later, when your Royal Banner was raised and the supreme Divine Staff was held high, the army's morale at the camp was severely shaken. The warriors were filled with doubt, and I too grew uncertain. When the warriors holding Greatbows began to shoot, striking wood more than an inch deep from over a hundred meters away, I became certain that the camp could not be defended! No warrior could survive under such shooting.

Since it couldn't be held, causing greater damage to your grand army would be meaningless for me and detrimental to the warriors who trusted me. Better to straightforwardly surrender, betting on you being a tolerant, magnificent, benevolent, and wise Highness."

Having finished his last statement, Kuluka still couldn't help but sneak another glance at Aweit, and Xiulote caught him squarely doing so.

Aweit fell silent for a moment before his voice adopted a chilly tone, "It seems, Kuluka, that you possess no loyalty to the Royal Family. Today, you can straightforwardly betray Tizoc. Tomorrow, you would betray me without hesitation!"

At this point, a hint of a smile appeared on Aweit's indifferent face, yet his eyes carried an unmistakable murderous intent, "I'll give you one last chance to persuade me to take you as my subordinate. Otherwise, you'll head to the Divine Kingdom!"

The tent was as silent as death, the generals as quiet as cicadas in winter. This was the ultimate majesty of the King, and the power that decided all.

Kuluka lay tightly on the ground, his body starting to shake uncontrollably. Large beads of sweat kept dripping from his neck, quickly wetting the ground.

Xiulote watched the plain-dressed Samurai on the ground, hesitating a bit, wanting to plead for Kuluka.



But when he looked again at Aweit's familiar yet unfamiliar majestic face, a chill ran through his heart, and the pleading words just couldn't be spoken.

"This is supreme power," the young man sighed softly in his heart.