

Civilization 79

Chapter 79: Father's Love, King to King

Both of them received the message and fell into deep thought.

Xiulote clenched his fists. Through the message, he seemed to faintly see his father's resolute face and the struggles of the Teotihuacan legions.

In his memory, his father was a truly strong samurai. He never spoke gentle words to him, even before he went to battle, his consolation was, "My son, you must be as strong as a samurai. As a samurai, you should calmly face death as if it were the way home!"

His father just buried his tenderness deep in his heart. He would feel for the exhaustion of his son after capturing prisoners, wanting his son to rest; he would clasp his son's hand, reminding him to be cautious; he would kiss his forehead, embracing his son in his chest. Oh, and there was the time when he was just born, when his father lifted him high and let out a hearty laugh.

Thinking of this, the young man also smiled warmly.

Perhaps influenced by his grandmother of common birth, his father didn't have much ambition for power, just gradually pushed forward by his grandfather. He didn't have the cold-blooded nature of the great nobility, who treated commoners like trash and their children as pawns, using only strength to cover the fragile emotions of a commoner.

This time, his father willingly risked his life, lurking beside the king, always ready to sacrifice himself with a single strike. It wasn't for himself, but for his son, Xiulote.

The young man quietly closed his eyes. In the adult world, there is no love without reason. His grandfather loved him for his exceptional abilities and the greatness of the family; Aweit loved him for his talent and their shared ideals; Bertade loved him for the vow of protection and the hope of the common people. If he lost these, love would linger and be reluctant to leave, but would ultimately depart.

In this world, only his father was the one who loved him unconditionally. From his own birth until his father's death. Xiulote would always trust his father and offer his own back to him.

As for his future wife, the young man had no knowledge of that now. He was willing to give all his heart to one person, restrain all his desires for one person, only hoping for a lifelong love that mutually cherish...

"We must change our plan," Aweit said after a moment of contemplation, wrapping his arm around the young man's shoulder. He roused the young man from his soft reverie back to the harsh reality.

"An army of thirty thousand from various origins cannot completely seal off the news, and there will inevitably be those secretly alerting Tizoc. He will soon know of our presence and the rough size of our force."

"Our original plan was to assemble thirty thousand samurai to control this key marching route and food camp, thus forcing Tizoc's food-strapped army to come here for a decisive battle. The terrain here is open, with sparse mountains and forests, and if Tizoc is defeated, it would be difficult for him to escape into the woods."

"But now, Tizoc has abandoned the vast majority of the city-state legions and concentrated all the food supplies in his hands. With the Supreme Commander Totec's decisiveness, once he assesses our superior troop numbers and the layout of our camp, he will likely persuade Tizoc to circumvent."

"Their food can barely sustain eight thousand troops directly under them back to the capital. If Totec is willing to lead the troops in a risky forced march, enduring the huge losses and recklessly into the unknown southern mountains, Tizoc has a good chance of escaping back to the Mexican Valley. It would be difficult for us to completely intercept them in terrain with limited visibility."

"Tizoc is currently trapped in the mountains, short of food, limited in information, and ignorant of the capital city situation. His army can easily be influenced by our rhetoric, and the samurai loyalty is at its most vulnerable low. This is when he is at his weakest."

"Once Tizoc returns to the Mexican Valley, even if he escapes alone, he could still regain the support of the Chief Priest Quetzal. Once he reestablishes contact with the great nobility, offers rewards and promises, and recalls the legions, restoring food supplies, our troubles will increase significantly!"

"By then, the opposing priesthods and nobilities would side with each faction, and the situation would evolve into a full-scale civil war between two royal family factions, and we would become the sinners of a divided alliance!"

Xiulote nodded with a stern expression.

The strength of King Tizoc wasn't just the troops in his hands. More importantly, behind him were the Chief Priesthood, parts of the Royal Family, and the great nobility supporting him. Once they have the righteous cause of the king, they can mobilize several more legions, tens of thousands of militia, and gather sufficient supplies.

There are still many military forces doubtfully watching from the outside. In the forests outside Xilotepec, nearly twenty thousand city-state warriors remain, there are four groups of eight thousand each within the territory of Atotoztli belonging to the king's uncle Trole, and the Eleven States of the Alliance can be mobilized again. If these forces get involved, though the outcome remains uncertain, the destructive power of the civil war would surely rise exponentially.

"So, what should we do? A light infantry raid?" Xiulote asked after a moment's thought.

Aweit turned his back, pacing back and forth in thought, then made up his mind.

"An army of thirty thousand cannot gather here and wait! I will disperse twenty thousand samurai, with four thousand in each group, widely deploy scouts, layering checkpoints, and block the southern mountain paths and the fields of the East. Tizoc must not be allowed past!"

"In the camp, only ten thousand elite samurai will be left behind, with three thousand hidden away, giving the enemy the illusion of a possible victory. Tizoc is currently unaware of the situation in the Capital City, nor does he know of Xiuxoke's identity. Given his prideful nature, if he has the upper hand, he won't flee but is likely to take a risk and fight."

"Raise my banner, and use food and myself as bait to lure Tizoc here!"

"If we haven't waited for Tizoc after three days, I will personally lead three thousand elite samurai in a light infantry surprise attack on his main camp! You take the remaining seven thousand men and quickly follow from behind."

At this point, a cruel and steely expression finally returned to Aweit's face.

"If this battle allows him to escape, we will march south immediately and seize the Capital City. No need to consider the long term, just offer up all the members of the Priesthood and the Great Nobility as a sacrifice to suppress all threats. Lake Capital City is an impregnable fortress; with it, we will be invincible."

"My sons are still young and do not yet possess the bearing of a king. If I fall in battle, I entrust the Royal Family's ceremonial duties to you, and the Divine Staff to my eldest daughter."

"You can tell the samurai that you were born on the day Montezuma died, under an auspicious omen, with Venus shining brightly. You are the reincarnation of the great former king and possess sacred royal authority! Stanley will lead the samurai of my family along with the nobility that support me, loyal to you and Alisa. Xiulote, take good care of her!"

Aweit's expression was cold and stern. His gaze twinkled slightly as he extended a large hand, pausing for a moment at the young man's neck before moving to caress his cheek.

Xiulote had no time to think, shock appearing on his face. This was the first time Aweit had spoken of his own death, clearly outlining the succession of the great undertaking. The transfer of Mexica royal power has always been accompanied by bloodshed and martial prowess.

Moments later, the young man stepped forward instinctively, embracing his teacher and friend tightly. He felt love like that of a father, which moved him deeply, his voice choking with emotion.

"It won't happen... Aweit, you won't die..."

Embracing the young man, Aweit's gaze finally softened, revealing a sincere smile.

The movements of the samurai were never delayed. The very next morning, the twenty thousand-strong army divided into five groups, quickly spreading to the East and South, controlling the mountains and plains within a week and blocking the passages to the heartland of the Mexica Alliance.

The Otomi guerrilla units then shrank back, leaving the battlefield to the two enormous Mexica battle groups.

Aweit's Supreme Commander's Royal Banner was flying high on the watchtower of the fourth mountainous camp, while Tizoc's Supreme Commander's Royal Banner struggled to stand at the peak of the third mountainous camp.

Separated by just three days, the hearts of the warriors from both royal armies were filled with complex emotions. Rumors, like the wind, had started to spread within Tizoc's army about a new king being enthroned in the Capital, and the Chief Priesthood deposing the former king. No one knew who was secretly spreading these rumors.

Tizoc's banner hesitated for two whole days. Xiulote was unaware of the chaos and disagreements that had unfolded, nor how many people's loyalties had changed. He only knew that two days later, Tizoc, with great effort, managed to rally nine thousand personal samurai, four thousand City-State Warriors, and ten thousand Militia, marching out in full force towards Aweit's camp.

Inside the camp, the samurai were gathering their strength, waiting for the signal to fight. Another two days passed in the blink of an eye.

On this day, Xiulote looked towards the distant sky. The noontide sun shone over the empty hills, and the autumn wind brought a solemn chill. The sunlight fell, reflecting off thousands of Mexica samurai and their gleaming War Clubs. The autumn breeze swept up wilting flowers and bent the fragile dry grass, heralding the end of lives.

On this sunny day, Aweit led ten thousand samurai, quietly waiting in front of the camp. Inside the camp, eight thousand Militia stood guard.

After a long while, the two Royal Banners finally appeared in the eyes of the Mexica warriors. Two vast armies, two sacred banners, two brothers of the same blood, crossed thousands of mountains and waters, their hearts filled with turmoil, now separated by only a few hundred meters.

At this moment, they looked across at each other, their emotions turbulent, their intent to kill overwhelming.

King against King! The royal authority of Mexica has always been passed down through bloodshed and martial prowess!