

## Civilization 881

Chapter 881: Long River in the Mountains, Everything Under Heaven!

The sunlight slightly leaned westward, falling obliquely from the zenith, giving the map a yellowish hue. The map appeared old, though it had been drawn recently. Depicting the world's mountains and rivers, every city and state, it also recorded the latest intelligence from the Alliance High Priesthood and the Kingdom of the Lake!

At this moment, Black Wolf Torc, Head Warrior Bertade, following His Highness's finger, simultaneously looked intently: they saw a long blue line extending away from Atoyac Lake, far south of Zicao City. It stretched through the mile-long mountains and valleys upstream, all the way to the Southern Army's camp south of Water Valley City!

"The Tarsas River, what a long river through the mountains! But alas, just this one section, just this one section!..."

Xiulote looked for a long time, sighing regretfully. He extended his finger, carefully tracing the undulating mountains south of the Mountain Pass Fortress. This treacherous mountain path, like the Yangtze River's Three Gorges, split the two-thousand-mile river into two segments difficult to navigate!

"Just a treacherous mountain path of one or two hundred miles, making it impossible to traverse! The kingdom's transport fleet has to stop here, travel two hundred miles by land to reach the upstream of the Tarsas River. But if a hundred-mile canal were dug along the western basin, relying on mountain streams..."

Hearing this, Black Wolf and the Head Warrior looked at each other, momentarily speechless.

Since the eastern expedition, His Highness had often lamented this treacherous water route, one obstacle among many. Yet the mountains and rivers of the world were determined when the Chief Divine slew the primordial sea monster, creating vast lands. How could mere human effort easily change that?

Bertade thought for a moment, then pointed virtually at the map above, explaining calmly.

"Your Highness, setting sail south of Zicao City, following the Tarsas River eastward for eight hundred miles, up to two hundred miles south of Eight Hundred Town, can accommodate the kingdom's large oar-sail ships and single-log war boats!"

"Indeed! This eight-hundred-mile journey, though it has treacherous narrows, is generally navigable, unimpeded! This is the kingdom's lifeline to the east!"

Xiulote nodded solemnly. His gaze moved to Zicao City, tracing eastward along the Tarsas River, softly reading the annotations along the way.

"From Zicao City eastward along the river, two hundred miles upstream, there's the first kingdom military town named Two Hundred Town, stationing a thousand militiamen! North of Two Hundred Town is the eastern mountain range of Zicao County, while to the south lies the Alliance-controlled mountainous Weytamo State."

The entire Tarsas River spans one to two thousand miles, running through the heart of Central America, connecting all southern parts of the world. To control even the eight hundred miles of the lower reaches requires securing strategic river passages at regular intervals, establishing sentry posts and military towns.

For the Southern Army, this river's significance lies in transporting food and military supplies from the kingdom's heartland to the upstream front, and transporting captured population downstream from the various parts of Tlaxcala. In the entire southern world, the Tarsas River's vast waterway is the only straightforward path through the mountains, linking the western kingdom to their eastern archenemy!

"From Two Hundred Town eastward, two hundred more miles upstream is the second kingdom military town, Four Hundred Town, stationing a thousand militiamen! Four Hundred Town lies at the edge of the Land of Jontal, and two hundred miles north of it is Prince Iskali's fief, the fortified Xitaqualo State. Four hundred miles northeast from Four Hundred Town is the capital of Raziko State, Tonatico, Sun City!"

Here, Xiulote paused slightly, a mysterious smile on his face. Black Wolf, curious, widened his eyes and pointed toward the location of Sun City.

"Ah! Sun City? Is this the city-state ruled by the Yuyan Family? The place where Predecessor Monarch Asayacatl, with his formidable prowess, 'subdued' over a dozen female chiefs?"

"Ahem! Yes, it's here. After Predecessor Monarch Asayacatl conquered the female chiefs, not only did he leave the Yuyan Family's bloodline, but he also renamed Chalko City to Sun City, or the City of the Sun... He also composed the Song of Spring to commemorate his deeds... And another meaning of Yuyan is actually the Divine Eagle of the royal sun, which no branch of the royal family could overlook... Haha!"

Xiulote coughed twice, finally unable to resist laughing out loud. Actually, considering closely, the leader of the Yuyan Family, Mixcoatl, should be a descendant of Predecessor Monarch Asayacatl, with royal blood, likely of the same generation as himself... After a while, the King, a smile tugging at his lips, looked eastward.

"From Four Hundred Town then two hundred miles east is the third kingdom military town, which controls the tin mines, Six Hundred Town, marked on the map as Tal Village! Tal Village is more than two hundred miles directly below Sun City, at a crucial rivermouth on the Tarsas River's lower reaches, a key stronghold for the kingdom! The kingdom has already stationed five hundred samurai here, deployed a thousand militiamen, fortified wooden fortresses and stone defenses, to initially develop the tin mines..."

Tal Village, located in the center of the Land of Jontal, is both a crucial rivermouth and home to large tin mines and scattered gold mines. The Kingdom of the Lake possesses large copper mines but lacks surface tin mines. This is the closest and easiest accessible tin mine area.

To hand Tal Village to the Kingdom of the Lake, the High Priest used some tactics in secret, making the original hereditary noble submit and concede it.

"A hundred miles east of Tal Village is another crossing of the Tarsas River, where the fourth kingdom military town, Seven Hundred Town, is established. Seven Hundred Town stations five hundred samurai to guard against the various Tepanec parts. A hundred miles south of this spot is the Tebanec-populated city-state, Chilpancingo, Honeycomb, or 'Land of Wasps,' also known as Bee City."

Xiulote paused his finger at the position of Bee City, his eyes flickering with contemplation. "Bee City" gathered tens of thousands of Tepanec tribes. To quickly develop the tin mines at Tal Village, it was necessary to collect tributes and acquire population from here.

"From Seven Hundred Town one hundred miles further east is the fifth military town, eight hundred miles from Zicao City along the river, Eight Hundred Town. Eight Hundred Town is at the confluence of

Tarsas River and Salty River, regarded as the starting point of the lower river. It stations five hundred samurai..."

"From here, traveling two hundred miles upstream along Salty River leads to the outskirts of Salt Lake and the Sarco State's capital, the city-state governed by the Huashu Family, Tequesquitengo, 'Lake Shore of Salt,' or Salt Lake City!"

At the mention of Salt Lake City, Xiulote's face showed a faint smile, though no one in the tent understood. Then he looked northward, silent in deep thought.

The so-called "Salt Lake" and "Salty River" were naturally places of abundant salt production. Sarco State not only produced salt but also had vast farmlands and a large population. Here, large tracts of cotton were planted, making it the wealthiest city-state among the Southern Three States. The Huashu Family, leveraging salt mines and cotton fields, could even trade bronze weapons from the Lake capital.

"Bertade, beyond Eight Hundred Town upstream is the treacherous two hundred miles of obstacles. As you mentioned before, you traveled that path yourself, didn't you?"

"Yes, Your Highness. That was twenty years ago when I served as a scout, on the orders of Predecessor Monarch Montezuma, to scout the various parts of the Mistec tribes..."

A rare hint of reminiscence appeared on Bertade's usually serene face.

"Beyond Eight Hundred Town upstream, the Tarsas River ascends steeply, turning northeast. It winds through the mountains for two to three hundred miles, ascending four to five hundred meters, passing through several dangerous waterfalls and cliffs! I've seen this hazardous river section myself: the total stretch has swift currents, with waterfalls and hidden reefs, brutally splitting the Tarsas River into two distinct parts!"

"This treacherous mountain path can only be traveled downstream, not upstream, unless using human force to drag the boats. Except during the peak summer rains, sailing here risks running aground. In summer, the surging currents make it easy for vessels of any size to capsize! Typically, east-west traders disembark at this waterway, traveling on foot around the path north and south, or engaging in nearby trade."

"After traversing these two to three hundred miles of treacherous path, the Tarsas River turns northwest upstream, passing the Mistec people's mountain stronghold, Chiauitl, or 'Mud Village'!"

At this point, Bertade paused, his expression turning grave. He pointed southward, concern in his eyes. "Sixty miles north of Mud Village is the Mountain Pass Fortress group. This is the first crucial point for the Southern Army breakthrough and the southern edge of our 'Mountain Summit State,' a necessary route for the military food supply. And between Mud Village and Water Valley City, only two hundred miles... according to the latest scout reports, the Mistec have sent several thousand samurai to Mud Village, though the exact number is unknown..."

"Your Highness, though the Mistec have not yet declared war on the Alliance, they implicitly threaten the Southern Army's food supply route. We must be cautious, always stationing heavy troops at the Mountain Pass Fortress group!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote nodded slowly, responding in a low voice.

"Yes, Bertade, you are right. Most of the six thousand Royal Legion soldiers entrusted to me by the King remain stationed at the Mountain Pass Fortress group. They are guarding the fortresses along with several thousand auxiliary militiamen, ensuring the protection of the food route and deterring the hidden threat of the Mistec."

The meaning of Chiauitl is "oily or muddy sludge." From its name, it's clear this area is a swampy, muddy terrain, challenging for marching troops. The Mistec established the stronghold here, leveraging the mountain terrain and swamps, stationing an indeterminate number of warriors, making the Southern Army constantly on edge.

The Mud Village region, with its muddy and treacherous terrain, is indeed easy to defend and hard to attack. To wage war against the Mistec from here would be unwise and nearly impossible. Facing such a covert, indestructible threat, Xiulote had no choice but to deploy a legion stationed at the Mountain Pass Fortress to guard the food supply route.

"Mistec... the western ancestral land..."

Xiulote looked southwest, his gaze piercing through the layered mountains to the distant horizon. Four hundred miles of rugged mountain path southwest of Water Valley City led to the western ancestral

land of the Mistec, Huajuapán, or the City of the Mountain and River. Here, Huaju means high mountain, and apans means river, combined as 'Mountain River City!'

"Look! After subduing the old enemy Tlaxcala, in a few years, the Mexica legion will march south! And Mountain River City..."

The King lowered his gaze, a burning battle intent ignited in his heart. The Tarsus River, stretching thousands of miles, linked east and west. And the conquest of the southern world was destined to begin along the long river.

#### Chapter 882: The Supreme Glacier Volcano, the Ancient Temple of the God of Death

The spring wind of April comes from the Caribbean Sea in the east, carrying a moist and warm breath. The season of spring farming is approaching, and in the Mexican Valley, black smoke from burning fields rises everywhere. At this moment, standing high and looking far, everything is in sight. Even outside Water Valley City on the east side of the mountains, one can see the richness and prosperity of the west side of the mountains from afar.

However, the east side of the mountains is full of desolation, filled with deathly stillness and despair. From the northernmost Divine Pass of the Tlaxcala Alliance to the southernmost mountain pass fortresses, over three hundred miles are filled with burning towns, barren fields, fallen corpses, and tribes abandoning everything to flee into the mountains.

The long wind blows, rustling the clothes. The mountain peaks shine, illuminating the vast snowy peaks. At this moment, Xiulote stands on the edge of Popocatepetl, looking up at the 5,400-meter high peak, unable to help but feel awe.

"The height of the smoke peak is like a pillar connecting the Divine Kingdom, straight into the clouds above! And only here, in the entire Mexica Alliance, can one see glaciers!"

Yes, Popocatepetl is also known as the Smoke Peak. It is the second highest peak in Mexico in later generations, and the fifth highest peak in North America, with an altitude of 5,426 meters! The altitude is so high that one can see snow and ice in the tropics and witness the magnificent volcanic glaciers at its top!

Xiulote looked up for a long time, gazing at the towering peak that obscures the sky, marveling at the majesty of natural wonders. The months of hard work seemed to dissipate in an instant, leaving only a sense of vastness and openness.

Yesterday, he led five hundred elite samurai from Water Valley City to the west, traveling thirty miles to the spectacular foot of Popocatepetl. Then, he encamped at the foot of the mountain and spent the night. Early this morning, he left three hundred heavy-armored samurai to guard, taking only two hundred leather-armored trusted aides to climb towards the higher part of the Smoke Peak.

The group climbed for four or five hours, from the 2,000-meter altitude of Water Valley City to the halfway point at 3,500 meters. The valley below was full of spring, while the mountains above were in the grip of winter. Yet, even in the cold here, there were still almost two thousand meters to the glaciers at the top of the Smoke Peak!

"Hoo!..."

Xiulote took a deep breath, feeling the oxygen deprivation and coldness on the mountain. Then, he exhaled slowly, leaving a long trail in the air.

"Bertade, is the death temple of the Tlaxcallans located here?"

"Yes, Your Highness!"

Bertade nodded solemnly, his eyes shining with a peculiar light.

"The god of death and rebirth, the lord of flames and thunder, the oldest temple of the God of Death Xiulotel is not far from here!"

"Excellent! Continue to lead the way! Have the samurai spread out and stay alert!"

Xiulote nodded slightly, his expression serious.

The Eastern expedition has come to an end, and the area around Water Valley City has just been pacified. The Southern Army is organizing outside the city, waiting for follow-up provisions and transporting captured young and strong men. The army is temporarily stationed, giving the king a few days of leisure.

This mountainous area has already been thoroughly cleared several times by the army. Although there are still hidden dangers of Tlaxcala tribes hiding, their numbers are definitely fewer than a hundred, posing no significant risk. At this time, Bertade suggested that Xiulote visit the sacred temple of the God of Death and listen to the old priest's prophecy.

Hearing this suggestion, Xiulote hesitated a bit, then readily nodded. Because, in Popocatepetl, the temple of the God of Death holds a very special and mysterious position!

The Mexica and the Tlaxcallans share the eastern and western sides of Popocatepetl, almost brothers in bloodline, and their cultures are quite similar. They share many gods, with the most unique being the God of Death, Xiulotel. The origin of the God of Death Xiulotel lies in Popocatepetl! According to the oldest mural records, Xiulotel was not originally a god of death, but an ancient god of the volcano.

Xiulote, who bears the name "God of Death," has a very special feeling towards this oldest temple of the God of Death, as if attracted by something inexplicable.

From a practical perspective, climbing the sacred Smoke Peak, worshipping such a temple, and listening to the prophecy of the priest of the God of Death... these actions can add a more awe-inspiring divinity to his reputation! In the devout belief in gods and the emphasis on omens in the lands of Middle America, such a mysterious divinity can greatly benefit the king's rule.

Moreover, this death temple holds an extremely sacred position in the hearts of the Tlaxcallans. Perhaps, it can become a key and a bond to win the hearts of the Tlaxcallan tribes.

"Hoo! This faint scent... is it the Stone of the Dead?"

Xiulote walked for a while and then stopped. He sniffed the air around his nose, somewhat surprised.



"Yes, Your Highness, there is a huge Stone of the Dead deposit here. The deposit has bottomless cracks, rumored to be connected to the abyss underground, emitting lots of smoke. And every once in a while, the Smoke Peak will completely erupt! It will spew burning lava and shoot out widespread smoke, connecting the deathly deep underground abyss with the lively present world!..."

At this point, Bertade showed reverence and lowered his voice.

"And the ancient temple of the God of Death is hidden near the Stone of the Dead deposit."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote nodded slowly. Popocatepetl is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, erupting almost every few years. And every half-century, there is a major eruption! In Aztec mythology, the 52-year cycle is actually closely related to the major eruption of Popocatepetl.

The mountain is vast and the woods are dense. At this altitude, the mountains are already full of cold-adapted coniferous forests. And among the large patches of trees, a few yellowish sulfur mines continuously emit the scent of the volcano.

Bertade led dozens of warriors around the sulfur mines, searching for two whole quarters of an hour before his spirits lifted, finding some clues.

"Your Highness, these are traces from the last month, most likely left by the old priests of the temple. They would come here periodically to collect the Stone of the Dead, ignite the sacred blue fire and grey smoke, and offer sacrifices to the God of Death!"

"The Stone of the Dead, burning sacrifices?..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote furrowed his brows. Burning sulfur every day, inhaling toxic smoke? These priests of the God of Death might not live long.

"...Yes, follow these footprints this way... huh? Why are there a dozen different footprints?"

Upon seeing this, Bertade's face darkened, and he waved his hand. The two hundred trusted aides gripped their bronze axes, taking down their longbows, and staying cautious. The group cautiously

followed the footprints on the ground, walking through the mountain forest for several miles before finding a low, dilapidated temple.

The temple has only two entrances and exits, its area is small and its style extremely ancient, with carvings mottled and old, seemingly having endured hundreds or thousands of years. It is hidden at the top of the mountain, deep in the pine forest, seemingly unwilling to be known and not welcoming outsiders. On the temple's walls, a row of weathered skulls is densely hung.

Xiulote looked closely and found that the bones of these skulls were somewhat black, resembling marks left after long-term poisoning. He pondered, speculating about the origins of the skulls, but remained uncertain.

"Ooooo... oooo!"

A long wind blew through, passing through the holes in the skulls, bringing a piercing and eerie "ooo" sound. The group, being accustomed to death, paid it no mind but intensified their vigilance.

Bertade, the head warrior, gazed at the temple for a while, then his pupils suddenly contracted. He then drew his bronze sword with a clang, stepping swiftly in front of the prince!

"Your Highness, there is fresh blood! Very fresh!"

#### Chapter 883: Temple, Princess Samurai and Your Highness

The mountain wind blew past, and the temple of the God of Death seemed to come alive, lowly chanting ancient memories. The cold wind swept through rows of skulls, issuing a melancholy "woo" sound like a flute. The hanging skeletons swayed with the wind, occasionally colliding and making drum-like "bang" sounds.

Xiulote pursed his lips, observing carefully. He also heard the crisp sound of wind chimes, which were teeth hanging from the skulls' jaws, resembling the soft whispers of the deceased. Various strange bone sounds intertwined, forming a unique symphony, masking the noises within the temple.

"All personal guards, half protecting His Highness and half surrounding the temple! Arrange two rows outside the temple, one row with shields up, the second row with bows ready. Surround from all sides like a pack of wolves hunting; don't let a single person escape!"

Bertade lowered his voice, giving some instructions to a few guard captains. After a moment, two hundred personal guards split into two groups. One group raised their shields high, tightly protecting Xiulote. The other group spread out in four directions, surrounding the small Temple of the God of Death.

In just a moment, two hundred elite Mexica warriors were ready, poised to attack at any moment.

"Your Highness, please wait here patiently for a moment."

Bertade squinted his eyes, gripping his bronze long sword with one hand and then grabbing a Great Shield. He glanced at Nashu, who was dressed in leather armor, bowed to Xiulote, and led dozens of personal guards rushing towards the mottled main door of the temple.

The commotion had already alerted the people inside the temple. As the head warrior stepped into the main door, a dozen bone arrows came flying!

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

"Bang!..."

Bertade dodged swiftly, raising his shield. Most arrows fell into empty space, hitting the dark bricks. Only one sharp feathered arrow stuck in the wooden shield with a heavy "thud".

"Kill!"

Dozens of Great Shield personal guards surged forward, swiftly rushing into the temple. From within the narrow temple, a dozen Tlaxcala warriors immediately leapt out. These warriors wore serpent-patterned war clothes, wielding Obsidian war clubs in their hands, meeting the advancing Mexica guards! Many warriors carried conspicuous Greatbows on their backs but had no opportunity to use them.

Bertade held his Great Shield and copper sword, but did not engage in combat. He patiently and keenly searched for the source of the sharp arrow just moments ago.

"Whoosh!"

A bone arrow, whistling with the breath of the God of Death, shot forth instantly at an extremely tricky angle. A Great Shield personal guard groaned and fell to the ground, blood gushing from his neck.

Bertade quickly glanced and confirmed it was a fatal wound, beyond saving. Then, he suddenly lunged forward like a jaguar spotting prey, swiftly rushing towards the great hall of the temple!

"Protect His Highness!"

Seeing the head warrior's moves, the battling Tlaxcala warriors screamed in unison. They quickly retreated, converging towards the center, disregarding their injuries, tightly blocking the front of the great hall.

"Hmm? His Highness?"

Hearing this title, Bertade froze slightly, momentarily distracted.

"Whoosh!"

Another precise bone arrow targeted the vital spot of his neck! Although the head warrior was distracted, his body instinctively reacted. He dodged with a swift step, narrowly avoiding the bone arrow of the God of Death.

"Hmm? Good archery!"

Bertade showed a calm expression, but a flash of surprise and admiration crossed his eyes. Then, he shouted without hesitation.

"Raise shields and charge, storm the great hall!"

"Kill!"

Dozens of personal guards charged forward in unison, wielding sharp bronze axes. They swung powerfully up and down, tearing enemy war clothes, cutting through thin cotton armor, and splitting fragile bodies!

"Splat!... Sizzle!..."

Soon, a spray of blood burst from the bodies of the Tlaxcala warriors!

The personal guards had the advantage in numbers, superior battle techniques, and weaponry. They took less than a quarter to push the enemies to the entrance of the great hall. In under another quarter, all the Tlaxcala warriors at the hall entrance were dead.

The front of the God of Death's great hall was covered in fresh blood, with a dozen corpses lying densely at the door. Then, the scene inside the hall became clear.

"Hmm? Women and children?"

Bertade frowned, paying attention to the situation inside the hall. A young female warrior in her early twenties held a longbow, aiming at the dozens of personal guards outside the door. Behind her, the faint silhouette of a child could be seen.

"Cruel Mexico! You have chased us down here!"

The young female warrior looked at the crowd outside the hall, knowing there was no way out. Her eyes widened in rage, shielding the child behind her, she shouted angrily.

"Our honorable family head has already committed suicide in the city; all the adult divine descendants are dead, yet you won't spare his last bloodline! Our noble divine descendant family will be wiped out today, and such fate will one day fall upon you! In this temple of death, I curse you with my life, you evil Mexica!"

"...Hmm?"

Hearing this, Bertade paused slightly. Then, his expression turned solemn, and he asked in a deep voice.

"Skilled female warrior, which divine descendant family do you belong to? What is your name?"

"Hah! Evil Mexica, don't think you can fool me!"

The female warrior spat and then abruptly drew her bow, shooting at Bertade.

"Thud!"

The head warrior was prepared, and swiftly raised his shield to block the sharp arrow accurately. His expression turned cold, and he looked at the surrounding personal guards, gesturing forward.

"Advance!"

"Wait!"

Under the cover of several Great Shields, Xiulote slowly walked into the temple, followed closely by Nashu with her bow. He scanned the broken stone doorway, glanced over the dark-bricked floor, looked at the red-tongued Divine Wolf statue, and then carefully observed the Divine Platform with black skulls in the center, finally turning his attention to the two people against the hall wall.

"Skilled female warrior, if I'm guessing correctly..."

Xiulote's gaze paused slightly on the serpent patterns of the female warrior's war clothes, then confidently asked.

"Are you divine descendants of the Water Serpent clan?"

"...Evil Mexica leader..."

The female warrior tightened her longbow, aiming at the young man before her. Although she had no chance of hitting him amidst the shield cover, she persisted in her desperate resistance!

"Who are you?!"

"...Hmm."

Xiulote pondered briefly and smiled.

"I am sent by the God of Death, seeking the prophecy of the divine priest of death."

"What?!"

The female warrior paused for several breaths, a look of grief and anger appeared on her face.

"You're not pursuing His Highness?"

"...Hmm."

Xiulote smiled calmly.

"Meeting you today is purely by chance, arranged by unpredictable fate... or perhaps, by the God of Death."

"Ah! Chance... God of the Hunt!... You abandoned us! I curse you!..."

The female warrior trembled all over, looking up at the sky, tears dripping from her eyes.

"White Serpent slave... they are not here to capture us?"

A seven or eight-year-old boy cautiously peeked out from behind the female warrior. He fearfully looked at the corpses scattered around, then glanced at the Mexica on the other side, asking softly.

"Can we... escape?"

"...Your Highness..."

The White Serpent female warrior trembled inside. She hurriedly tried to shield the boy, but he kept peeking out, looking around. Finally, she dropped the longbow, picked up the boy, and covered his eyes.

"Your Highness, don't look... we... will stay here, and go nowhere."

Dozens of warriors holding Great Shields and bronze weapons surrounded the small temple completely. However, without orders from His Highness, they remained silent and solemn, watching the two.

"..."

Xiulote quietly observed, his heart, as firm as a rock, suddenly softened. He smiled and spoke calmly.

"We have come seeking the divine priest of the God of Death for a prophecy. Capturing you is not my duty. Tell me where the divine priest is, and I will let you go!"

"Haha... hahaha!"



Hearing this, the White Serpent female warrior paused momentarily, then suddenly burst into a sorrowful laugh.

"Divine priest? Seeking prophecy? Haha, hahaha!..."

Her hoarse laughter echoed in the temple of the God of Death, accompanied by the ringing of skulls, resonating in the cold sky. The sky was a pure blue, the mountaintop was pure white. And the ground beneath was a pure black mixed with pure red. Then, a sorrowful voice mixed all colors, even bringing madness.

"Prophecy? No prophecy, only nonsense! The old priest rambled some prophecies, daring to curse the Four States Alliance, intimidating my family head... I've already slain him!"

#### Chapter 884: The Prophecy of the God of Death

In the ancient temple, death symbols were everywhere. Skulls swayed on the walls, teeth bells jingled in the wind, bodies lay prostrate before the great hall, and blood seeped into the black stones. The sound of ghastly laughter echoed throughout the temple, like the wailing of a dying beast!

"Hahaha!..."

The White Serpent Samurai held the boy, leaning against the weathered wall. She laughed heartily, tightly closing her hands, covering the boy's eyes.

"The old priest of the Mexica's God of Death that they were looking for, has been killed by me!"

"Damn it! How dare you!"

Bertade angrily took down his longbow, nocking an arrow and aiming directly at the vital points of the samurai. At such a close distance, he was confident that he could pierce through her with a single shot!

"Haha? How did I dare?"

The White Serpent Samurai seemed oblivious. She laughed loudly, glaring at the black wolf statue of the God of Death in the great hall with hatred.

"The leader of the Mexica, claimed to be the God of Death. The old skeleton head was also a priest of the God of Death. Who knows what evil connection lies between them! He cursed the Four States Alliance and terrorized my prince; he deserved to die! Damn him!"

Xiulote frowned, looking at the somewhat demented samurai. He pressed his lips together and asked in a deep voice.

"Where is the corpse of the God of Death priest now?"

"The corpse? Naturally, after killing him, it was buried outside the temple. The old guy was terrifying; why would I keep his old skeleton head to scare my prince?"

"White Serpent slave, I'm not afraid."

At these words, the boy struggled a bit, but the samurai held him tighter. He spoke softly.

"With you here... I'm not afraid of skeletons."

"Your Highness!..."

The samurai's eyes turned red instantly. She hugged the boy tightly, unwilling to let go, as if holding onto her last hope.

"...Hoo!"

Xiulote watched for a while, then sighed softly. He calmly, finally promised.

"White Serpent Samurai of the Water Serpent Clan! Tell the prophecy, and I can spare your lives."

"Prophecy?"

Hearing these two words, the samurai's voice suddenly rose. She screamed hoarsely, as if resisting something she didn't want to accept.

"No prophecy! The old skeleton head had no prophecy! He was mad, nothing but gibberish!!"

"Whether it's a prophecy, someone will naturally judge."

Xiulote's expression gradually hardened, his inner softness turning hard again. He promised and decided, brooking no opposition.

"... Spit it out! My patience won't last long."

"..."

The samurai stopped screaming. She looked at the man's body, the sturdy leather armor, the gold-trimmed obsidian necklace, and the black wolf-patterned cloak. She guessed the man's identity, eyes filled with deep suspicion, and against fate, a sense of despair.

"If I speak, will you really... let us go?"

"Hm. The Chief Divine will witness!"

"Heh! Chief Divine? War God?... Pooh! Evil Mexica, you are the fallen ones colluding with the volcano demons, spreading endless death, greedily extending your bloody tongues like black wolves!"

"Buzz..."

Upon hearing this, Nashu squinted her eyes, wearing an unkind expression. She slowly pulled the longbow, also aiming at the samurai's vital points.

Xiulote remained silent. He said nothing, his eyes turning deep, like an unfathomable sea. He didn't act, just looked up, staring at the statue of the God of Death, staring at the red tongue. After a while, he whispered calmly, his words only for Nashu to hear, meant for himself.

"Death is the price of life. Without death... there can be no unification... Without unification, there is only more death!"

"Hahaha, death!... Haha, God of Death!"

The samurai looked at the statue of the God of Death, laughing, even laughing to the point of tears. She laughed until her voice turned hoarse and she couldn't catch her breath before abruptly stopping to ask coldly.

"Mexica leader, who exactly are you?"

"..."

Xiulote was silent for a moment. Then, he stared at the samurai expressionlessly, a faint declaration emerging.

"I am the Mexica's God of Death, Xiulotel."

At that moment, the divinity of the king surged, while humanity was buried deep in the heart. Under the name of the God of Death, he acted in the realm of death. Without joy, without compassion.

"What?! You!"

Upon hearing this, the samurai was stunned, rendered speechless. Her face first showed shock, then disbelief, followed by sorrowful fury, turning into a sea of hatred ... Finally, the madness filled with murderous intent!

"God of Death Xiulotel! It's you! It's you! With the cruel Mexica legion, using the power of the volcano demons, you destroyed our city-state!... I will kill you!!"

The samurai's scream became more and more sharp, her expression turning mad. She suddenly leaped forward, picked up the longbow on the ground, and pulled it open, aiming at the great enemy of Tlaxcala.

"Whizz! ... Whizz!"

Two sharp feathered arrows whistled through the air. One struck the left arm, the other the right leg. Then, the bronze arrowheads hesitated momentarily, tearing through the cotton armor, plunging into flesh.

"Pssh! ... Pssh!"

"Ah!..."

The samurai let out a shrill scream, dropping the longbow and collapsing powerlessly to the ground. Blood gushed from her armor, dripping onto the ground.

"Thud thud!"

The great shield warriors at the door stepped forward in unison, aiming their weapons at the two in the corner.

"White Serpent slave! You're hurt..."

The boy cried out, throwing himself onto the samurai. He reached out, trying to cover her wounds, but the blood kept flowing, his tiny hands unable to stop it.

"Ugh!..."

The samurai groaned in pain. She stared at the little prince, struggling to hold his hand, pulling him into an embrace. This time, she didn't cover the boy's eyes.

"Your Highness! Look... at that man over there!"

"Huh? White Serpent slave?"

"Look at him..."

"Alright!"

The boy nodded, his dark eyes wide open, staring intently at Xiulote.

"Your Highness, you must remember, he is our enemy, the enemy who destroyed our city-state, the enemy who destroyed the Glory family! You must remember him, even if you die, remember him!"

The samurai whispered bitterly, filled with hatred.

The boy hesitated for a moment. He looked at the handsome young man for a while and nodded.

"White Serpent slave... I remember. I remember his appearance."

"Good! Look a few more times, curse him!..."

Xiulote lowered his eyes, quietly watching everything, like the statue of a divine being, observing the rise and fall of the mortal world.

Blood flowed quietly, soon soaking the ground. A strange flush appeared on the samurai's face. Her expression became calm, she didn't bandage her wounds, only gently stroked the boy's neck, softly singing.

"I came to the temple of the God of Death,

With the last hope,

Found the old priest,

Prayed for his prophesied guidance...

"

"Hm? Prophecy?"

Hearing this, the Head Warrior's expression became solemn, ready to step forward to ask more.

"Let her sing."

Xiulote spoke blandly, his face unchanged. The Head Warrior immediately stopped, holding his longbow, listening carefully.

"The priest looked with murky eyes,

At the divine descendant of the Cloud Serpent

He inhaled the maddening smoke,

Speaking in a raspy jumble of words!

"

The samurai's voice became increasingly shrill, hoarse with a tone that seemed to pierce the heart, like the low mournful cry of the dead.

"Death is imminent,

The brightest Morning Star will fall.

The immortal Gods will die one after another,

In the holy resting place!

"

"Hm? Morning Star... Gods?"

Xiulote was somewhat puzzled, contemplating in silence. Prophecies were always full of ambiguous imagery, unclear about what they were truly indicating.

"The Cloud Serpent dies here,

Its people will also perish.

The Sun sets here,



Its people will slaughter each other.

"

At this point in the song, the samurai's voice was filled with deep despair. She could not accept the old priest's prophecy, such a miserable and desperate ending. She sang sharply, like a mourning raven, announcing the passing in the land of the dead.

"Only the God of Death,

Will be eternal in the world of death.

Rising like the Sun from the West,

Illuminating this desolate land.

"

"The Sun rising from the West?"

Bertade was stunned, a happy expression appearing on his face.

"Then,

Death comes from the West.

Death comes from the East,

Death comes from the South,

Floating everywhere with the wind.

"

"Death... Floating everywhere?"

Nashu widened her eyes in confusion, unable to imagine such a scene.

"The God of Death closes his eyes,

Touching the invisible death,

Nurturing life in the demise!

Then, he too will die,

In the place between the Moon and the mountains,

He will...

"

"Haha! Hahaha!"

The samurai stopped singing, once again breaking into a hoarse laugh, the prophecy abruptly cut off.

"Invisible death?"

Xiulote was startled, thoughts racing, his eyes widening suddenly. His expression turned extremely serious, staring sternly at the samurai before him, shouting angrily.

"What next? What's the next part of the prophecy?!"

"What's next?"

The samurai laughed wildly, shaking her head.

"What's next, nothing! The old skeleton head was killed by me, so naturally there's nothing more!"

"Damn! Truly damnable!"

Bertade's face darkened with anger. He threw down the longbow, pulled out his sword suddenly, and lunged at the two in the corner!

#### Chapter 885: Divine Object, Grim Reaper's Skull

The skull relief is carved in the ancient hall, and the death murals surround the two people in the corner.

Obsidian Samurai falls to the ground, bleeding, and laughing hoarsely. The boy curls up tightly in her arms, staring ahead in fear. Head Warrior strides forward, holding the sharp bronze sword diagonally. A path is opened by many Great Shield warriors, who then follow closely behind.

"Bertade, spare their lives!"

The King shouted, and Head Warrior slowed his steps, turning the edge of his bronze sword to its thick side.

"Hahaha! Mexica, you shall forever be in doubt!"

Obsidian Samurai laughs maniacally, using her uninjured right hand to draw the long dagger from her waist. Then, she lowers her head and softly kisses the boy's forehead.

The boy looks up, in this temple filled with death, staring blankly at the person he trusts most in his life. He sees the tears in Obsidian Samurai's eyes and feels the gentle kiss on his forehead.

"White Serpent...sister?"

Upon hearing the boy's address, an unprecedented smile appears on Obsidian Samurai's face. She gently embraces the boy, placing the long dagger in her hand lightly against his neck.

"Little Water Serpent, go in peace, carry the glory of the Water Serpent Clan, with everlasting hatred! And your Obsidian Samurai will follow you!"

After speaking, she bites her teeth, grips the long dagger tightly, and slashes down fiercely.

"Ah!...ugh..."

In an instant, the boy's eyes widen and he convulses in pain. He feels the warmth and life departing, pleading with a final whisper.

"White Serpent... it hurts...ugh!..."

"Little Water Serpent, don't be afraid, I will accompany you!"

With that, Obsidian Samurai raises the long dagger, without hesitation, aiming it at her heart.

Bertade had already arrived before the two. He stopped his steps, lowered his bronze sword, and watched this scene of the warrior's suicide, lightly sighing.

"...Skilled archer Obsidian Samurai, do you have any dying poetry you wish to leave for the world?"

"Haha! Poetry? Legacy?..."

Obsidian Samurai filled with hatred, deeply looked at the King, and spoke her final prophecy.

"He shall perish... even the God of Death who governs death, will close his eyes and die... but death is not his end... what awaits him is eternal solitude!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote trembles all over, his pupils suddenly contracting. He quickly stretches out his hand and screams sharply.

"Stop!..."

"Thud! Ugh!"

Obsidian Samurai exerts sudden force, the sharp obsidian dagger pierces through her heart, causing her to curl up in pain. Blood then gushes out from her chest, falling on the boy's corpse and blending with the blood pool on the ground. Next, her body leans softly and collapses onto the boy, holding him in death.

Xiulote gazes at the crimson before him, slowly lowering his eyes. At this moment, countless memories flash through his mind. Telascallan Divine Descendants hanging heads, warriors slain in battle, massacred militia and captured women and children, along with the killed Priest, self-sacrificing Obsidian Samurai, and the fallen boy...

After a while, the King sighs deeply, uttering a mysterious inquiry.

"The fall of Zhao to Qin, is it like this?..."

"Ah? Your Highness?"

Nashu blinks, her face displaying confusion.

"Command the warriors to search inside and outside the temple, find the corpse and relics of the God of Death Priest!"

"As you command! But how should we handle these two bodies?"

"...Find a scenic spot near the temple, and bury them together!... Do not erect a tombstone."

"Yes, Your Highness!"

Bertade bows respectfully, immediately going to arrange it.

In the ancient hall, time-honored and desolate, death has long become commonplace. Xiulote takes a few steps forward, arriving before the Black Wolf statue of the God of Death.

Before the statue, there is a divine platform made of green stone, seemingly in the style of the Toltec ancestors, estimated to be at least several hundred years old. And on the platform, a black death skull is worshiped with black pottery ritual vessels. The skull is almost completely weathered, showing strange black and gray marks, and engraved with the wolf emblem of the God of Death.

"Ah! Could this be?... The divine relic from the Temple of Death among the Tlaxcalas, the skull of the mythical Blood Tongue Black Wolf, possessing the divine power of the God of Death?!"

Bertade's face shows excitement, staring at the ancient skull, as if seeing ancient divine authority.

"Hmm!... It doesn't matter what it was before."

Xiulote touches the strange skull, feeling the smooth jade-like texture, calmly declares.

"From today, it is the Death God Skull of the Tlaxcalas, and also the Death God Skull of the Mexica!"

Then, the King thinks slightly, issuing a royal decree.

"Bertade, once we return to the camp, hold a sacred ritual! Celebrate that both the Chief Divine and the God of Death have bestowed me the divine object! Let the Tlaxcala captives and surrendered army send representatives to participate in the holy ceremony!"

"As you command! Your Highness is wise!"

The warrior bows deeply, saluting the supreme King, and bowing to the ethereal divinity.

"Nashu..."

Xiulote turns his head again, looking at the close Intelligence Officer.

"Organize my experience of climbing the Divine Mountain, visiting the temple, and obtaining prophecy and divine relic...and then spread it among the Southern Army and occupied towns!"

"Following your will, Your Highness!"

Nashu bows with respect, already prepared. The so-called organization is naturally like epic and myth, endowing it with awe-inspiring divinity to spread among the people. In fact, this is the most important purpose of the King's ascent to Smoke Peak Divine Mountain!

In this ignorant and wild era, in this world that reveres the divine, the ethereal divinity is an extremely powerful force!

To conquer the tribes of the world, their hearts must be won. And winning hearts is not something simple force can accomplish. It requires oral legends, incredible divine relics, and heart-shaking miracles. The tribes of the world have not long left ancient times, the concept of nations has not yet formed, and ethnic recognition is far from reaching unity. At this time, half of the people's hearts lie in customs and traditions, the other half in divine gods and relics. Only supreme divinity can unify and resolve the bloody feuds between tribes!

"Hmm. Let it be so!"

Xiulote nods, holding the black jade "Death God Skull", and turns to leave. Once he returns to the camp, he will use this divine relic to create a new divine staff.

Soon, the ancient hall is left with gradually coagulating bloodstains, stained red murals, and the God of Death's Black Wolf. A cold wind blows, the eerie chime rings again, telling the stories that happened, in the wind of death~

The volcano stands tall, the glacier shines, unchanged for tens of thousands of years. Xiulote stands on the cold mountain, finds a chilly red crystal rock, and sits cross-legged. This is the residue of the volcanic eruption, also hiding the power deep underground.

After a while, Head Warrior rushes over, with a look of regret.

"Your Highness, the corpse of the God of Death Priest has been found."

Xiulote nods slightly, following Head Warrior's steps, arriving at the pine forest near the temple.

The soft soil has been dug up, revealing a withered, shriveled corpse, and a skin-and-bones old skull. The owner of the corpse died two days ago, yet his appearance is already indistinguishable. Perhaps, his appearance is just like this, just like death.

"Whew!... The prophecy of the God of Death Priest...the God of Death Xiulotel..."

Xiulote silently watches for a moment. A mysterious phrase suddenly emerges in his heart, lingering long.

"...Even if guidance has shattered, please ascend...as the ruler of the world!"

Chapter 886: Sacrificial Rite Ceremony, Population Migration



The grand sacrificial ceremony was held outside Water Valley City. The War Priests demarcated the sacrificial area and erected the Divine Platform for the Chief Divine. They sang ancient hymns, lit the blazing Sacred Fire, and prayed atop the high sacrificial platform, offering the heads of divine enemy descendants as sacrifices.

The firelight illuminated, and the sacrificial songs echoed. Xiulote, dressed in the ceremonial dress of the Black Wolf, holding the Scepter of the Grim Reaper's Skull, stood at the highest point of the Divine Platform, several meters high. He looked down, seeing tens of thousands of legion warriors outside the platform cheering in praise, resembling bees swarming in the mountain forests. Thousands of Tlaxcala captives were prostrated at his feet, like an ant swarm covering the plain!

"...I am guided by the Heavenly Divine, ascending the Divine Mountain and discovering the ancient Temple! The Chief Divine blesses me, and the God of Death grants me the Divine Object! ...That is, the skull of the blood-tongued Black Wolf from the myth, possessing the Divine Power, the 'Grim Reaper's Skull'!"

Xiulote gazed at the crowd below, feeling the direct human heart-touching power within the Divine Authority. He raised his new scepter high, revealing the black skull on top, proclaiming the divinity that rules all beings!

Soon, low exclamations arose from all directions, accompanied by devout prayers. The Tlaxcala people present were all in shock and awe, doubting and uncertain. They had heard the myth of the 'Grim Reaper's Skull' and believed in the noble divinity of the Divine Mountain. However, why did such a heritage Divine Object fall into the hands of the Mexica Commander?

"I control a mighty legion, wielding the Divine Power of volcano and death! In the name of the God of Death, I have received His blessing! A few days ago, on the Divine Mountain, the God of Death bestowed upon me the Divine Object of the Tlaxcala people to tell you all!"

Xiulote declared with vigorous confidence, like a divine spirit.

"From now on, you Tlaxcala tribes must heed my guidance! I inherit from the most ancient God of Death, the noblest divine descendant in the world! You must obey me and surpass those weak Serpent Descendants!"

"...Ah..."

The captured Tlaxcala people fell into silence, helpless and bewildered. They looked around but could not find their Tribal Priests' guidance. The nobles who held the power to speak in their tribes had long been wiped out by the Mexica. Meanwhile, the Mexica Warriors and the God of War Priests around them cheered thunderously in one voice.

"Praise be to the Chief Divine! Praise be to the God of Death, His Highness! ..."

"He is the divine descendant of the God of Death! He is the Sun decreed by the Chief Divine!"

Divine Smoke rose everywhere, bringing the aura of the Divine Kingdom. The sacrificial ceremony site was frantic, with Priests chanting, praying, and stirring the emotions and wills of the masses. This collective frenzy gradually spread, finally affecting the captured Tlaxcala people, leading them to shout in submission.

"Praise...Esteemed...God of Death, Your Highness! ..."

Calls of reverence sounded sporadically from the crowd of tens of thousands of captives. Gradually, these voices grew louder and more enthusiastic, turning into a mixed and loud howling.

"Praise the mighty God of Death, His Highness!"

"He is the divine descendant of the God of Death!"

"Pray and submit to Him! ..."

Xiulote raised the Skull Scepter, spreading his arms wide, welcoming the sun that rose to the sky's zenith! Using the tone of a Priest, he chanted prayers loudly. Then, hundreds of Chief God Priests sang high chants together!

"Praise the Chief Divine! He blesses humanity! ...Praise His Highness! He rules all beings! ..."

The grand sacrificial ceremony lasted a full day. Not until all Tlaxcala captives were exhausted from shouting, with their minds imprinted with new reverence and submission, did Xiulote, his voice hoarse, announce the ceremony's end. He wasn't clear how potent this sacrificial ceremony would impact the captives' minds nor how long it would last. However, he knew clearly that the seeds of obedience were sown under the name of the divine, and a new assimilation was beginning.

In mid-April, the first batch of young and robust Tlaxcala captives began to be transported from Water Valley City to the rear, numbering tens of thousands.

They were escorted by thousands of Prepecha Warriors, spending four or five days to march over a hundred li southward to reach a series of fortresses at a mountain pass. Then, they would follow a southwest mountain valley path, passing through Cloud Mountain Village controlled by the Southern Army, marching seven or eight days over two hundred li, to reach Eight Hundred Town on the north bank of the Tarsas River.

The kingdom's Southern Naval Forces had been waiting outside Eight Hundred Town. All Tlaxcala captives would board vessels there, headed west. Thereafter, they would follow the Long Tarsas River downstream for about twenty days, traveling eight hundred li! Passing through Seven Hundred Town, Six Hundred Town, Four Hundred Town, and Two Hundred Town, they would finally enter Atoyac Lake, and disembark on the south shore of Zicao City!

The entire transportation process would take about a month, with rest and supply military towns along the way. The old General Etalik of Zicao County had prepared to receive the continuously transported young and robust captives. Afterwards, the captives arriving at Zicao City would be split into two groups. Half of them would head west to Apa County, establishing village militias and developing the vast Apa Plain. The other half would stay in Zicao County, becoming registered civilians, developing the county's western lakeshore. In essence, this area was still considered the outskirts of the Apa Plain.

"Now, the main force of the Southern Route, considering trades with each City-State legion commander, is transferring forty thousand young and robust men and women towards the kingdom!"

Xiulote sat cross-legged in the large tent, browsing the latest records. Each day, trusted aides from the logistics camp would report the number of traded captives.

The kingdom originally had twenty thousand captured Militia, who were the first to be transported. Over the past half month, the kingdom had traded gemstones and bronze equipment with the three City-State legions for over twenty thousand women and children.

At this moment, the three City-State legions had scattered within tens of li nearby, continuously capturing and sending back Tlaxcala Tribes captives. The Coiled Python Clan Leader had even sent an Envoy to the nearest highland state, summoning a new batch of three thousand Militia.

"The Southern Shipbuilding Department has only been operating for a year and a half, so the kingdom's Southern Naval Forces are relatively weak. The transportation route is overly long, and even with segmented transportation, they can only transport over ten thousand captives a month!"

Thinking this, Xiulote frowned slightly, contemplating carefully.

The eastern expedition had reached this point, and the pre-planned strategies were being implemented. The Southern Army was plundering and trading captives, transporting the young and robust population via organized water routes to the kingdom's interior, strengthening its foundation. However, the number of captured Tlaxcala surpassed the kingdom's expectations, and the actual efficiency of water transportation was lower than previously estimated. This was mainly due to the two hundred li of treacherous paths, adding additional walking distance.

The combination of these factors resulted in the accumulation of captives within the Southern Army.

"Too many captives, truly a fortunate dilemma! Fortunately, the army seized a significant amount of food at Water Valley City, sustaining forty thousand people for a year. If not for this loot..."

Xiulote smiled, feeling a bit of goodwill towards the escaped Black Serpent.

"Hmm. The legion under the Black Wolf's command has rested and is about to march one hundred thirty li east to attack Mountain Peak City. There are nearly one hundred thousand Tlaxcala people in the Mountain Peak City area; the number of captives then..."

At this, the King finally made a decision, looking at the Head Warrior standing by.

"Bertade!"

"Your Highness."

"Record the Royal Decree."

"Yes!"

"April is already half over, and spring plowing is about to begin. Aside from the twenty thousand currently being transported, the remaining twenty thousand young men and women must be stationed south of Water Valley City for farming! Instruct the Southern Shipbuilding Department to expedite the construction of low-cost, easy-to-transport double-hulled canoes!"

"Simultaneously, have Ezpan and Etalik prepare to include the migrating young and robust captives into village militias quickly, distributing grain seeds and farming tools. They must prioritize planting corn; if too late, they should plant pumpkins to stave off hunger!"

Bertade quickly wrote down the decree and, in a moment, presented it for the seal. Then, several trusted aides entered the tent, carrying the still wet ink orders, and hurried away.

"Your Highness, after August, no crops can be replanted. How should we arrange the population returning to the kingdom after that?"

"Hmm. For those returning after August, arrange them to build huts, clear mountain forests, dry up swamps, and dig canals...In short, instruct the two plenipotentiary County Magistrates to ensure grain production and keep the able-bodied busy!"

The Central American colonization had one climatic advantage; there was no need to prepare thick houses or warm clothes for winter.

"As you command!"

Bertade smiled serenely and began writing again.

Xiulote was deep in thought when a Messenger rushed in, drenched in sweat and red-faced like a shrimp.

"Your Highness! Urgent military report!"

"Speak!"

"The Mistec people are showing renewed unrest! In the small Willow Fort a hundred sixty li to the south, thousands of new warriors have appeared!"

#### Chapter 887: The Threat of the Mistek People

The sun shone brightly, illuminating the simple large tent. The samurai stood solemnly guarding the abode of the king. The messenger came from afar and bowed down to report. The king held the Divine Staff and stood up tall.

"Thousands of Mistec Warriors have appeared in the Little Willow Fort?"

Xiulote unfolded the map, searching in the basin south of Water Valley City. The first thing that caught his eyes was the small city of Tlaxcala, 80 miles south, the captured city of Itzocan, the Blade Road City.

In Navajo, itz is the abbreviation of itztli, meaning "flint and small knife," while ocan is the transformation of ohtli, referring to "path, road." Combined, it means "Path of Flint," Blade Road City. As the name suggests, the terrain here consists of surrounding mountains, a basin, with undulating hills and rocky mountains.

From Blade Road City, going southwest along the basin for another 70 miles, you reach the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses. This group of fortresses is also part of the main supply route of the army. The supply route goes along the mountains, from High Mountain City first to the southeast, reaching the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses. Then it turns northeast along the basin, through Blade Road City, and down to Water Valley City.

The whole supply route is nearly 300 miles long, supplying an army of fifty thousand and tens of thousands of prisoners. The militia troop carrying the food, heads bowed, kept moving, maintaining the army's lifeline.

"Mountain Pass Fortress group, Blade Road City..."

Xiulote stared at the rear of the army, the two most critical logistical points. Then he moved his finger, exploring the basin where Blade Road City is located.

In the southeast corner of the basin, there is a conspicuous mountain path, winding southeast between the mountains. Traveling a hundred miles through the mountains, you reach the military camp where Mistec reinforcements are stationed, Huejotzingo, the "Place of Little Willows," the Little Willow Fort.

"Little Willow Fort... Little Willow Trees..."

Xiulote stared at the Mistec fort hidden deep in the mountains, frowning slightly. Then he looked at the Head Warrior.

"Bertade, what is the terrain here?"

"Your Highness, Little Willow Fort has a large area where little willow trees grow. Such places where little willow trees grow are mostly muddy and wet swamps. Similar to the Mud Fort, the terrain here is also muddy and treacherous. Difficult to deploy an army, it's quite easy to defend but hard to attack."

"Ha! Reinforcing thousands in Mud Fort, threatening the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses sixty miles north. Reinforcing thousands in Little Willow Fort, threatening Blade Road City a hundred miles north. Is the Mistec army stationed at these two places trying to threaten the army's supply route?"

Upon saying this, Xiulote's face showed anger, and he shouted sternly.

"Send the legion envoy to the two forts and reprimand the leaders of the Mistec people! Ask them if they want to turn against the Mexica Alliance and betray their suzerain!"

"As you command, Your Highness."

Bertade nodded, immediately writing two royal decrees, called in two trusted aides, and sent them to various Mistec tribes in the south. Then he pondered for a while, speaking frankly.

"Your Highness, the Southern Army is stationed beneath Water Valley City, ready to rescue the rear route at any time. It takes only two to three days to go to Blade Road City and five to six days to reach the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses. The Mistec's reinforcements in key frontline positions may not have the determination and courage to directly fight the alliance! Most likely, they are aiming to pin down the alliance's forces, allowing the Telascallan to hold on longer!"

"Hmm."

Xiulote nodded, holding the Scepter in his hand. He thought for a moment and gave further orders.

"Increase rear defenses. The Royal Legion of six thousand men will be stationed separately at the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses and Blade Road City. As the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses is closer to the rear, add four thousand militia to guard. As for Blade Road City, add two thousand militia, and keep a close watch on the southeastern mountain pass."

Thus, there are three thousand samurai and four thousand militia, totaling seven thousand men at the group of Mountain Pass Fortresses. Blade Road City has three thousand samurai and two thousand militia, totaling five thousand men. With the defending army occupying favorable terrain, even if thousands of Mistec Warriors suddenly attack, they can hold out until the main force arrives.

"Lastly, send elite scouts to carefully investigate! How many reinforcements did the Mistec send, and how many are warriors, and how many are militia?"

"At your command!"

After arranging the defenses, Xiulote's expression slightly relaxed. He carefully looked at the situation in the south, as murderous intent surged in his heart.



"Bertade, the Mistec people hidden in the southeastern mountains threaten our supply route at any time."

"Your Highness, the supply route is currently quite stable. The defending forces in each place occupy critical terrain. Without deploying a large army, the Mistec cannot cut off the supply route."

"Hmm, with the Southern Army stationed here, if the Mistec dare to march north, they will be decisively broken!"

Xiulote was full of confidence in the main legion's combat strength. But soon, his tone changed, and his expression became serious.

"But if the Mistec army stays hidden, neither advancing north nor retreating, it becomes troublesome. They hide in treacherous terrain in the mountains, difficult to conquer. If the army continues to march north for another 120 miles, besieging the four critical Snake Cities of the Telascallan... At that point, how can we ensure the safety of the rear route? Do we have to keep splitting forces to be stationed, being led by the nose by the Mistec people?"

Upon hearing this, Bertade frowned as well.

Although the Mistec have not raised the flag of rebellion against the alliance, preparing for the worst is necessary, treating them as enemies. The Five Mistec States have over 800,000 people, with an estimated twenty to thirty thousand warriors. This place is only more than 300 miles from the western homeland of the Mistec, Mountain River City. Their food supply would not be a problem, sufficient to support tens of thousands of troops. Beyond the Mistec are the Three Zapotec States, having about 500,000 people and around twenty thousand warriors.

Of course, the various Mistec and Zapotec clans are city-state alliances, with internal factions belonging to different honorable nobility, lacking a strong king or great chief. Yet, they would not muster warriors for all-out battle unless faced with imminent destruction.

"Yes, the Mistec threat always looms, and its precise scale remains unclear... It always feels like a thorn in the side, truly uncomfortable!"

"Your Highness, what do you mean?"

"I have an idea, but I haven't decided yet."

Xiulote pondered for a while, then sternly ordered.

"The Black Wolf's over ten thousand troops will continue advancing east for 130 miles these two days, eradicating the flanking Mountain Peak City. The Huashu Corps will follow along, suppressing tribes and capturing prisoners in that area. The Yu Yan Corps, having the strongest warriors, will continue north for 60 miles, flanking north of Cholula City, blocking roads and plundering surrounding villages. The least capable Pang Mang Corps will remain in the Water Valley City area, thoroughly clearing the entire basin."

"As for the Imperial Guard Legion, they'll be stationed at Water Valley City, holding the south and north. I will personally be stationed here, arranging the spring plowing for the Telascallan prisoners, and addressing issues with the Holy City... The campaign against Telascallan tribes is not urgent. The Southern Army has achieved breakthroughs, while the Northern Route Army has more warriors and stronger combat strength..."

Xiulote paused briefly, gazing towards the northern mountains. He seemed to be looking through hundreds of miles, seeing the prestigious royal banner of the "Evil Spirit Commander," of the mighty Mexica Alliance.

"I believe it won't be long before there is good news from the Northern Route Army!"

Bertade nodded and looked northward together. At this moment, he also awaited the breakthrough of the Northern Route Army, eager for the climax of this eastern expedition.

Several days later, the Mistec leader responded to the envoy, claiming "Loyal Mistec tribes have no intention of rebellion, just cautiously guarding against remnants of Telascallan fleeing inland." However, according to scout reports, Mistec Warriors gathering in the south continued to increase.

In late April, the Black Wolf led ten thousand troops eastward to attack Mountain Peak City. The Yu Yan Corps advanced north, plundering and blocking roads. The Holy City Cholula was terrified, sending

another envoy to Water Valley City to request an audience with His Highness. Xiulote did not permit it, still refusing to meet.

By the end of April, an envoy from the Lake Capital City finally arrived from the west, bringing the latest news of the Northern Route Army!

## Chapter 888: The Siege of Feathered Serpent City, The Ongoing Siege Warfare

"Buzz... Bang! Bang!"

Rows of catapults outside the eastern and northern walls trembled, emitting a thunderous roar, hurling burning fireballs! Over twenty fireballs, like whistling meteors, flew a distance of two hundred steps and crashed fiercely within the western walls of Feathered Serpent City. As the fireballs landed, burning charcoal and sulfur scattered instantly, large flames rose, releasing billowing thick smoke.

Thousands of Tlaxcalan warriors shouted fiercely, holding their positions atop the walls, suffering through the drifting smoke. Thousands of city-state militia ran around busily, using baskets of dirt to extinguish the fireballs and put out the raging flames. The acrid toxic smoke came rushing towards them, carrying the terrifying scent of a volcano. Many were smoked black, their hair singed and disheveled, coughing uncontrollably as if trying to spit out their lungs.

Quiahuitz, the lord of Feathered Serpent City, stood atop a high place in the city, watching the battle before him, silently gripping the serpentine divine staff in his right hand.

Feathered Serpent City, Quiahuiztlan, is one of the four core cities of Tlaxcala. It is the newest, built roughly a hundred years ago, located the farthest north of the cities, controlling the northern entrance of the Valley Mountain Range. To guard against the Mexica, the walls of this strong city have been repeatedly fortified, standing seven to eight meters high. The outer layer of the wall is built with nearby volcanic stone, while the inner layer is thickened with dirt, both layers bonded with mortar, making it hard to dig through or destroy.

The entire Feathered Serpent City covers an area of only about three square kilometers; it is more of a fortress than a city. To the south and east of Feathered Serpent City lies the confluence of the Atenco River (Rio Atenco) and the Apizaquito River (Rio Apizaquito). The two rivers meet at an angle, protecting half of the city walls within. In later years, this place would be known as Apizaco, where the rivers converge into a shallow area. The banks on both sides of the river are extremely muddy, making it

difficult to deploy troops. The Mexica can only attack Feathered Serpent City from the north and west sides.

Overall, Feathered Serpent City's defenses are quite robust, taking full advantage of the terrain. It is easy to defend and difficult to attack. In fact, this is a common characteristic of the four core serpent cities of Tlaxcala: they are purely built as strongholds for war, established in strategically vital locations!

"Within the city, we still have three thousand warriors, seven thousand militia, and two years' worth of provisions. The other three serpent cities are just thirty li to the southwest and will keep sending reinforcements... the God of the Hunt will protect us! I will surely defend this place!"

Quiahuitz silently prayed, unable to dispel the anxiety swelling in his heart, though his face remained calm. After all, he was the chief of the divine descendants in the city, one of the four most honored kings of Tlaxcala, and must always maintain his dignity.

Hundreds of Feathered Serpent trusted aides clad in leather armor and wielding obsidian clubs surrounded the city lord. They were ever ready to support the warriors and militia at the city walls, willing to sacrifice their lives for the most esteemed divine descendant!

"Order the moth people in the city to dig more dirt! Dismantle the wooden walls of the nobles' mansions to make wooden shields for the city walls!... Start with my palace!"

Quiahuitz watched for a moment until the fireballs had been extinguished by the moth people, then he sternly commanded.

"Also, summon the priests of the God of the Hunt to perform a prayer ceremony behind the walls to protect the warriors defending the city-state! Remember, the God of the Hunt will bless Feathered Serpent City!"

"Yes! The God of the Hunt will bless Feathered Serpent City!"

A dozen trusted aides shouted in unison, bowed, and then dispersed. Soon, the small city was filled with voices and became busier.

Thousands of men and people prepared supplies for the city's defense, using stone tools to make crude large shields, arrows, and rolling stones. Over a thousand warriors waited behind the city walls, ready to support at any moment. Dozens of temple priests lit the sacred fire, cutting their cheeks and praying frenetically day and night. The city's military nobility also mobilized, maintaining order everywhere and standing guard on all sides of the walls, facing the Mexica at the front line of the battle.

At this moment, to resist the enemy's attack, divine descendants, nobility, priests, warriors, and men and people all stood united! For they all understood, the consequence of defeat was death and sacrifice, with no possibility of retreat!

After two quarters, the thick smoke on the city walls had gradually dispersed, no longer obstructing the view. The Mexica army outside the city also began to move. Outside the western and northern walls, a thousand elite royal warriors assembled. They wore copper helmets and copper armor, wielding longbows, all well-equipped. The royal bow samurai lowered their heads, forming a loose formation, advancing swiftly to within sixty steps, braving the feathered arrows from the wall.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

As soon as the bow samurai took their positions, a volley of sharp copper arrows shot forth, suppressing the Tlaxcalan archers atop the wall! Dozens of screams echoed from the walls, and scores of bodies immediately fell from the walls. The Tlaxcalan archers, crouching low, also desperately fired arrows downwards.

Waves of bone arrows struck the royal warriors, occasionally clashing against their copper armor with a "ding". A few warriors grunted, hit in the face and neck by precise divine archers, and collapsed dead on the spot.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!... Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!..."

Relentless rains of arrows crisscrossed over the walls, incessantly claiming lives and exhausting the archers' strength. After several rounds, the arrow volleys from both sides clearly thinned out. Then, the sound of drums for the charge arose from the Mexica formations behind.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

Outside the walls on both sides, a thousand city-state militia, wearing simple cloth garments and carrying dozens of seven- to eight-meter-long scaling ladders, quickly advanced toward the walls. As soon as they approached, a large number of javelins were hurled down from the walls, followed by thrown wooden blocks, stones, and a few jars of lime.

"Ah!"

The attacking city-state militia cried out in agony, hundreds instantly falling dead or injured. Some with arrows in their bodies howled as they fell; some with heads struck by stones collapsed dead instantly; others, covering their eyes filled with lime, bled tears of agony. However, the drumbeat grew more intense, spurring the militia forward with no retreat, only continuing the assault!

"Bang, bang, bang!"

The city-state militia strained to set up the long ladders, hooking them onto the walls with copper hooks and desperately climbed, only to be shot, crushed by falling stones, or killed by warriors' war clubs.

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

The copper-armored bow samurai below released arrows rapidly, disregarding the risk of injuring their own militia, continuously shooting at the exposed Tlaxcalan warriors.

Following a volley, dozens of warriors screamed in agony, falling from the crowded walls. Their fate was sealed; even if they survived the fall, they would be killed by the militia below.

"Bang, bang, bang!"

The defending army atop the walls hurled down projectiles, causing heavy casualties among the unarmored militia. After another quarter hour, the remaining few hundred militia could no longer hold on and collapsed backwards in despair. Meanwhile, many of the defending siege weapons atop the walls were depleted and couldn't be replenished quickly.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

The second wave of war drums sounded immediately. The royal overseer drew their war clubs, preparing to execute the first two hundred retreating militiamen as per the king's order. At the same time, two thousand long-prepared city-state warriors let out a shout and rushed to the ladders hooked onto the walls.

"Praise the Chief Divine, fight for the gods!"

The city-state warriors raised their shields, tightened their grip on war clubs, and in a moment, charged to the wall. They were the true assault force, whereas the previous militia served merely as expendables to clear the way.

"Kill!..."

The warriors shouted, swiftly climbing up the walls. With reddened eyes, they desperately swung their war clubs, fighting the equally intense Tlaxcalan defenders to the death!

"Hmm. The Tlaxcalans' morale hasn't diminished. Today's siege is still about depletion,"

King Aweit stood on a high hill, behind him the royal banner of the "Evil Spirit Commander," surrounded by hundreds of divine eagle nobility battle groups. His face remained expressionless, watching the crowds surging and shouting atop the walls, the ever-blooming bursts of blood resembling ants fighting.

The king was clad in brand new skull armor, lined with cloth and bronze, covered externally with leather, bone decorations, and feathers, adorned with bright gemstones and gold grains. In the sunlight, he sparkled, akin to a heroic spirit from Mexica mythology!

"The stamina of the first group of royal bow samurai is nearly exhausted,"

King Aweit narrowed his eyes, observing the warriors exchanging fire. He then waved the command flag, ordering his trusted aides.

"Sound the battle drums! Let the second group of royal bow samurai form up and prepare for action!"

"At your command, exalted Mexica King!"

The trusted aides shouted with their chests out, then ran to the front. Soon, the war drums beat more urgently.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

The war drums pounded, city-state warriors fought fiercely atop the walls, royal warriors shot arrows from below. Constant screams resounded as warriors fell from the high walls, becoming part of the pile of corpses. In less than a quarter hour, a messenger rushed from the other side of the formation.

"Your Majesty, Legion Commander Vite of the Valley Mountains Legion, an honorable noble Izel sincerely requests! He says, today's assault on the North City by the Valley Mountains Legion has already resulted in the loss of two hundred warrior squads, one thousand militia company... Please, exalted king, have the loyal Valley Mountains Legion withdraw slightly to regroup!"

"Ha-ha! Izel, that little trickster..."

King Aweit laughed heartily, cursing lightly. Then, with a wave of his hand, he commanded solemnly.

"Make the Valley Mountains Legion of Telokan State continue the assault for another quarter, then replace them with the Golden Gorge Legion of Weyoplhethlan State!"

"At your command, exalted Mexica King!"

The messenger stood tall and shouted once more, then immediately turned and conveyed the order.

Chapter 889: The Siege of Feathered Serpent City, The King's War

"Boom... Boom... Boom!"



After half a quarter, the sound of the war drums slightly eased, and the vast army immediately began to move. The second batch of two thousand Royal Bow Samurai swiftly advanced, approaching the walls, continuing to suppress the defenders atop the city walls.

Outside the walls, filled with corpses, the first batch of Royal Warriors heard the drum beats, fired their last feathered arrows, and killed the remaining militia on the walls. After several quarters of fierce fighting, they ran out of arrows and their strength was exhausted. At this moment, they carried the bodies of dozens of fallen Bow Samurai and orderly retreated from beneath the walls.

"Boom... Boom Boom!"

The rhythm of the war drums noticeably changed, becoming increasingly intense. Two thousand City-State Warriors responded to the command, rushing to the western and northern sections of the walls. The first batch of City-State Warriors atop the walls suffered heavy casualties, unable to break the deadlock, barely maintaining their position on the walls. The bodies of both sides fell like rain from the walls, intertwining and overlapping, the blood forming small pools.

Seeing the second batch of City-State Warriors arrive, the first batch breathed a sigh of relief and stopped resisting. They took turns covering each other, retreating from the walls and abandoning the already opened breach. The warriors from different City-States had no obligation to bleed for the others' assault.

"Praise the God of the Hunt!... Ugh..."

Seeing several hundred remaining Mexica Warriors retreat from the walls, the Tlaxcala defenders had just begun to cheer when a volley of precise feathered arrows whistled through the air, taking dozens of lives!

"Whiz whiz whiz! Whiz whiz whiz!"

The fresh Royal Bow Samurai rapidly fired arrows, targeting the nobles and warriors atop the walls! Two Tlaxcala nobles screamed miserably and then fell back, causing chaos among their family warriors. However, the relentless rain of arrows continued unabated, "bang bang," striking the great shields atop the walls, killing those who dared to peek out and suppressing the defenders' throwing.

"Praise the Chief Divine, fight for the gods!"

Led by the War Priest, the second batch of City-State Warriors shouted in unison. Then, under the cover of Bow Samurai, they climbed up the walls, continuing to battle the defending army.

Seeing the Mexica initiate a new wave of siege, Quiahuitz, the Lord of Feathered Serpent City, gritted his teeth. He waved the command flag, and hundreds of Feathered Serpent Warriors rushed to the walls, filling the flesh and blood defense line. Close combat ensued, war clubs sliced through flesh, and no one could escape. The crimson flower of life bloomed all over the walls; the piercing death song echoed throughout Snake City!

"Whew, the family warriors have finally retreated!"

Izel, the Clan Leader of the Mountains, stood outside the northern part of the city walls, wearing copper armor covered with a robe. This copper armor, gifted by the kingdom's prince, was exceptionally sturdy and impervious to battlefield stray arrows.

At this moment, Izel looked at the warriors who had finally retreated, letting out a long breath. His face showed both relief and some heartache. Today's battle for the Mountains Legion seemed to be over, but it cost the lives of two hundred warriors.

"These days, the siege has become increasingly brutal, and the Mountains Legion has suffered six to seven hundred warrior casualties, nearly two thousand militia! The Four States' armies combined also lost two to three thousand warriors and six to seven thousand militia... While the King's Royal Warriors, clad in solid copper armor, merely suppressed the defenders from below the walls, suffering only about three hundred casualties!... If this continues..."

A trace of gloom flickered across Izel's face. But when he thought of the three Royal Legions commanded by the King, thousands of copper armor warriors, Bow Samurai... Izel sighed deeply, murmuring to himself, with hidden resentment in his heart.

"Honorable King of the Mexica Alliance... you are my King, but not a King of the City-State Warriors!..."

"Excellent! The Strait Gold Legion of Weyoplhethlan State will take over the Mountain Legion of Telokan State to attack the North City! The Acid Wood Legion of Tepanecapan State will take over the Reed Marsh Legion of Atotonilco State to attack the West City!"

Aweit watched the fierce battle of various City-State armies, a faint smile on his face. He spoke with intent, smiling.

"With this arrangement, the North City becomes 'gold,' and the West City becomes 'wood.' In today's intense assault, the four City-State armies will take turns in battle, each sending a thousand warriors to ascend the walls! Warrior combat combined with archery will surely kill two thousand defenders! In another four or five days of such attack, I want to see if 'gold' will break the city first or 'wood' will break the city first!"

Outside Feathered Serpent City, there were four City-State armies from the north of Mexico. They came from the western northwest Telokan State, northwest Tepanecapan State, north Weyoplhethlan State, and northeast Atotonilco State. Yes, these four states had quite complex names, but their meanings were actually simple and straightforward.

In the west, Telokan State was headquartered in Toluca, Telokan, 150 li from the capital city. Telokan meant "the mountains with abundant gold," which was Gold Mountain City. As the name suggested, Gold Mountain City was rich in gold, quite affluent, and surrounded by mountains. The Lerma River meandered beneath the city, flowing east into Lake Texcoco. The Mountains Legion came from here, with four thousand City-State warriors and four thousand City-State militia. The Legion Commander was the Clan Leader of the Mountains, honorable nobility Izel.

Northwest Tepanecapan, headquartered in Jocotitlán, Xochitl, meaning "the forest among sour fruit trees," called Tzompantli City. Tzompantli City was located along the Lerma River, 200 li from the capital city, rich in timber and fruits, and quite populous. The Acid Wood Legion had four thousand City-State warriors and four thousand City-State militia, commanded by the Acid Wood Clan Leader, honorable nobility Xochitl.

North Weyoplhethlan State, headquartered in Pachoacan, Pachjo, meaning "the land of canyons and gold," called Vite. Vite was 180 li from the capital city, much like Gold Mountain City, surrounded by hills and mountains, and rich in gold. However, it lacked sufficient rivers and fertile farmland, making it less populous. The Strait Gold Legion had three thousand City-State warriors and five thousand City-State militia, led by the Strait Gold Clan Leader, honorable nobility Pachjo.

Northeast Atotonilco State, headquartered in Tulancingo, Tulanco, meaning "the hills among reeds," called Reed Marsh City. Reed Marsh City was 240 li from the capital city, the furthest away. Further northeast, a hundred li beyond, were the Vastek people, who had submitted to the Alliance.

In fact, the northeastern borders of Atotonilco State, with the Vastek people, and southeastern borders with the Tlaxcala people, had been the frontline of the Alliance's countless wars. Atotonilco meant "the land between hot springs."

The entire Atotonilco State was rich in hot springs, the land exceptionally fertile, but one-third was controlled by the Tlaxcala people. In the eastern key grounds, outside Hot Spring City, two ancient sacred bath springs were historic religious sites, said to have a thousand-year legacy built during the distant Teotihuacan Period. The Tlaxcala people had occupied this place until two months ago, when the northeastern army's expedition conquered it!

To fight the near enemies, Reed Marsh City mobilized five thousand City-State warriors and three thousand City-State militia, forming the resolute Reed Marsh Legion. The Legion Commander was the Clan Leader of the Luwei Family, honorable nobility Xintle.

These four honorable nobility commanding City-State armies were the true power leaders of the northern states of the Alliance, wielding independent military forces, families inheriting vast territories. At this moment, they were all summoned by the divine war, leading troops to gather and fight under the banner of conquest against the enemies, dispatched by the King to the frontline against the Tlaxcala people...

"The divine war against enemies is an unrefusable righteousness! And the three Royal Legions I command are an inevitable force!"

With this thought, a satisfied smile appeared on Aweit's cold face. He softly gazed at the blood-soaked battlefield, as if looking at the most beautiful scenery. The desire for conquest fiercely surged in the heart of the mature king, making it hard to suppress, softly speaking to himself.

"The supreme king is destined to conquer the world! Whether the factions outside the alliance or the states within the alliance, they shall all bow beneath my feet!... Haha!"

Aweit's laugh, low and reverberating on the tall hillside, was filled with confidence in controlling everything. He enjoyed the war, and constantly instigated it, gaining glory and power!

Because brutal war destroys the old order, allowing the strong to establish a new one. In the new order, the loose alliance will be completely reshaped, condensed into a centralized powerful Empire!

Chapter 890: The Siege of Feathered Serpent City, Fall and Captivity!

The warm wind of May, howling from the southeastern sea, brought the first rain of the rainy season. For days, Feathered Serpent City had been attacked in turns by four City State armies, gradually bleeding dry. And now, the Mexica legion was making a grand move, the royal family and the City-State warriors donning their armor and climbing together, attacking all four city walls. The once formidable Feathered Serpent City was at its last stand.

The sun in the sky was shrouded by layers of clouds, casting broad shadows, dimming the mountain forests in all directions, and darkening the battlements where the fighting raged. Star-like raindrops fell from afar, soaking the defenses littered with bodies inside and outside the walls, blending with countless fresh bloodstains, inseparable from each other.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Fight for the gods, kill the Tlaxcala people!"

"Oh God of the Hunt! We sacrifice ourselves for Him, here and now, a deadly struggle with the Mexica!"

"Swish, swish, swish!..."

"Bang! Bang, bang!"

The fierce cries of battle echoed from the walls on all sides, interspersed with the whistle of feathered arrows and the fierce hurl of javelins. Both sides' warriors fought with abandon, desperately swinging their weapons, attacking the enemies entangled in close combat.

The close-quarters combat was exceedingly brutal, whole bodies soon mutilated, warm blood flowing freely everywhere. And on the narrow battlements, more and more platinum-armored figures appeared, like an irresistible tide, gradually breaking through the barrier of flesh and blood, drowning the remaining blackness atop the walls!

The Feathered Serpent warriors in black war clothes howled and hacked, striking against the solid copper armor, only to be mercilessly slain by the opposing bronze axes. In their desperate struggle, the numbers of the Tlaxcala warriors diminished ever more.

Before the seemingly invincible Mexica copper-armored warriors, hundreds of ordinary militiamen began to collapse. They threw down their crude stone spears and hunting bows, turning and fleeing while wailing, some even leaping off the walls in panic, emitting dying screams!

"Ah! God of the Hunt!!..."

It was a cry of fear, despair before impending death.

"It's broken! It's broken! Feathered Serpent City is broken!!"

It was a jubilant cheer, a proclamation before the slaughter.

"Oh! Merciless mother of fate!..."

Feathered Serpent City Lord Quiahuitz stood alone atop the pyramid temple in the city center. He looked up, gazing at the statue of the Cloud Serpent of the God of the Hunt amidst the drizzling rain. After a moment, two streams of faint tears flowed from the corners of his eyes, mingling with the fresh raindrops, indistinguishable from each other.

"These are the tears of the Cloud Serpent, coming from the high heavens, shedding for the demise of Feathered Serpent City..."

Quiahuitz recited in a low voice, his expression a mix of sorrow and mirth. His voice gradually lowered, becoming almost inaudible. Meanwhile, another voice rose from the foot of the pyramid, shouting maniacally.

"Damn it! Where is the Feathered Serpent City Lord?"

Izel, clad in copper armor and wielding a hand axe, seized an elderly temple priest. His expression fierce, his eyes showed eagerness mixed with overt murderous intent.

"Speak! Is he in the temple?"

"...The, the exalted descendant of the Cloud Serpent...just went up...at...at the temple's top!"

The elderly temple priest stammered out his words, his face a mask of fear.

"Honorable War God warrior, I...I am willing to surrender to the War God...please spare me...ah!..."

After a scream, Izel lowered his bloodied hand axe, leading dozens of mountain warriors up the pyramid in eager haste.

Capturing the Feathered Serpent City Lord of the Tlaxcala people would be a great merit, even considered the first merit of the Northern Route Army! With such military achievement, he could secure his position as the head of the Mountain Legion, earning the genuine respect of the warriors within the state!

"The Cloud Serpent lowered its wings, transforming into a warrior with a bow and arrow. He carried the bow, heading towards the East, seeking his divine son...And the souls of the deceased divine descendants would also drift towards the East, going to the distant Great Lake..."

Standing tens of meters high, Quiahuitz looked towards the mountains in the East. In his hand, he held a long dagger, lightly carving serpent-like marks onto the leather armor on his chest. The cold tip pierced the skin over his heart, bringing a sharp, genuine pain.

Like the Mexica, the Tlaxcala people also believed that the soul resided in the heart. The death of piercing the heart would release the soul, allowing it the fastest passage to the Divine Kingdom...

"Ha! Found you! Feathered Serpent City Lord!"



Reaching the temple's high spot, Izel's eyes fell on Quiahuitz, crowned with feathers. Overjoyed, he immediately raised his hand axe and rushed towards his target.

"...Brave Mexica warrior, according to the Flower Battle covenant, permit me an honorable death! Grant me the time to drink a cup of water and recite a few verses before I sacrifice myself..."

"Huh? What? Feathered Serpent City Lord, I can't hear your voice clearly..."

Izel lowered his hand axe, with a look of puzzled confusion. He slowly approached Quiahuitz, as if trying to hear more clearly.

"Warrior, I want to sacrifice myself, please give me some time..."

"Ha!"

Coming within five steps, Izel suddenly let out a loud shout and lunged at Quiahuitz.

"Ah?!"

Quiahuitz instinctively thrust his long dagger, but it clanged against the other's armor plate with a metallic sound. Then, a sharp pain shot through his right arm, struck by the back of the bronze axe, causing the dagger to drop instantly. Soon after, his left arm was also struck, completely rendering him unable to resist.

"Ha ha! Finally, Feathered Serpent City Lord, you are in my grasp!"

Izel laughed out, pinning Quiahuitz firmly under him. Then, several mountain warriors surged forward, firmly binding the most precious divine descendant captive.

"Hey! The Flower Battle covenant? An honorable suicide?"

The member of the Mountain Family scoffed disdainfully. He reached out, wiping the blood off his bronze axe onto Quiahuitz's luxurious war clothes.

"Feathered Serpent City Lord, let me tell you this! This era has changed!... Don't struggle, don't seek death, accept your fate. Given your status, you can still enjoy the preparations for the grand sacrifice in the Lake Capital City!

The cold voice carried a hint of joy, the raindrops from the sky falling onto Quiahuitz's face. The Feathered Serpent City Lord closed his eyes in hopelessness, preserving his last dignity. Soon, several mountain warriors ran towards the outskirts of the city, shouting loudly.

"Feathered Serpent City Lord Quiahuitz, captured by the valiant Clan Leader of the Mountains, honorable nobility Izel!..."

"Feathered Serpent City Lord Quiahuitz, captured by the valiant Clan Leader of the Mountains, honorable nobility Izel!..."

The loud cries rang out, spreading far and wide from the city. Hearing the dreadful news, the remaining hundreds of Tlaxcala warriors howled in despair. Some ended their own lives, others charged at the Mexica army, while some kneeled and surrendered. Thousands of defending militia also began kneeling down, dropping their weapons, awaiting their fate.

"Good! Very good! Honorable nobility Izel, credited with the first merit in the battle of Feathered Serpent City!"

On a high ridge where banners stood, Aweit heard the glorious news, a broad smile spreading across his face. The honor of capturing an enemy's nobleman was far greater than that of killing one! Such captives were favored by the War God and were prized sacrifices that glorified the Alliance!

"Ha ha! Feathered Serpent City is broken, and the Feathered Serpent City Lord captured...Order all corps! Accept the prisoners in the city, do not indulge in wanton slaughter!"

Aweit laughed as he gave the order, instructing his trusted aides to promptly deliver the message. He laughed heartily, curbing the city's slaughter, but without any sense of mercy.

"The expansion of the holy Great Temple is complete. Once I defeat the Tlaxcala people and return to the Capital City, there will be a grand offering, an unprecedented great sacrifice! All the captive warriors and militia are to be transported back to the Capital City, awaiting the day of the great sacrifice!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Following your will, exalted Mexica King!"

The trusted aides, their expressions fervent, shouted aloud. They saluted in unison before heading off to the various corps.

Standing tall and straight, Aweit stood at a high point, rubbing the Yellow Gemstone Scepter in his hand, his gaze growing profound.

Before setting out, he had handed the Ruby Scepter of his grandfather Montezuma to his beloved daughter Alisa. Now, the Yellow Gemstone Scepter in his hand not only bore the Mexica Royal Family's regal authority but also embodied the divine power of the tribal priests.

After a moment, Aweit smiled faintly, looking up at the sky. The drizzling raindrops fell, a fitting spring rain, perfect for the alliance's spring plowing!

"What a splendid spring rain, bringing boundless vitality, falling on the fertile land of Feathered Serpent City, on the territory of the Alliance!"

Aweit's voice was gentle as he looked towards the southern sky. Then, his expression turned serious, and he ordered his trusted aides in a stern voice.

"Go, inform the Envoy from the Holy City Cholula, Priest leader Pet!"

"The northern Divine Pass and Feathered Serpent City have all been conquered by the Alliance! Tonight, I will drink and celebrate in the great camp, and I ask the priest leader of the Holy City to dance in my honor!"