

Civilization 891

Chapter 891: The Eastern Expedition of the Northern Route Army, the Songs of the Samurai

The night has fallen, and large bonfires are lit; bamboo flutes are played, accompanied by distant songs. The aroma of food wafts far, the joyous laughter of the samurai fills the camp. The entire main camp of the Mexica Northern Route Army stretches for several miles, filled with the joy and celebration of victory!

Aweit, dressed in royal attire, sits cross-legged in the main tent, holding the Divine Staff tightly in his hands. He watches the legion commanders celebrating and joking, feeling relaxed and pleasant. Months of campaigning flash in his mind, scene after scene, as clear as if they were before his eyes.

In December, the Mexica Alliance launched a Divine War, mobilizing the entire army in a solemn declaration of the campaign.

Dressed in royal attire, Aweit held the Eastern Campaign departure ceremony in the square in front of the Great Temple. Elders sat briefly on the vine rack, receiving the kneeling rites of various tribal leaders. Then, amidst the cheers of the capital city's citizens, Aweit officially paid homage to the ancestors, prayed to the Chief Divine, and announced the start of the Eastern Campaign!

The army set out eastwards, shaking the wilderness; all tribes across the land were alarmed, while the Telascallan fully contracted!

Eighty thousand troops of the Northern Route, five royal legions, four city-state legions, and one elite militia proceeded to the Northeast in succession. Subsequently, ten legions gradually unfolded, pouring into the southeastern Atotonieltl State, engaging the Telascallan in sequence.

In this era, due to logistical and combat method limitations, such a number of legions absolutely cannot be squeezed into the same battlefield; division of forces into multiple routes is inevitable.

In January, Giant Bear Stanley led a royal legion and an elite militia, totaling sixteen thousand warriors, along with six siege Divine Eagle Cannons, first dividing forces southward. They were responsible for attacking the southern mountainous Divine Pass, the most treacherous.

Divine Pass was the western hinterland of the Telascallan, the key portal of Weisoqinke State. It occupied a treacherous mountainous location, isolating north-south mountain routes, not a single fortress but a cluster of dozens of fortresses. Due to terrain constraints, Divine Pass's front cannot deploy a large army, allowing only a thousand to assault from below, and at most two legions can be positioned, which is the limit.

In early February, Aweit led eight legions eastward continuously. The main force of the Northern Route Army attacked the Telascallan border fortress, then conquered the ancient Hot Spring City.

Hot Spring City was located northeast of the Lake Capital City, just over two hundred miles; logistical pressure on the army was not large. From here, sixty miles south, was the east-west stretching towering mountain ranges. The mountains blocked, the army cannot pass through them. The most important of the Four States Alliance, the Tlaxcala State, was just behind the mountains.

To cross the mountains, one must go through a mountain pass. Extending a hundred miles east-west, the mountain range finally revealed a flat southern mountain pass, accessing the heartland of the Tlaxcala State. At the mountain pass, two rivers converged and a solid fortress stood, this being the Feathered Serpent City, the northernmost of the Four Snake City.

Aweit didn't rush southwards but paused for several days in Hot Spring City, waiting for various legions to arrive. From here, a hundred miles north were the unstable Vastek people; three hundred miles east were the tense and mobilizing Tototanak people.

In mid-February, Aweit divided forces again into two routes. He dispatched the reinstated Commander Casal, leading four city-state legions, totaling thirty-two thousand samurai and militia, eastward around Feathered Serpent City, suppressing the northern Telascallan army.

Casal had been silent for many years, finally earning the King's trust, gaining reinstatement. He became low-key in his actions and extremely respectful to the King. Casal had served as Mexica Commander for many years, fighting the Telascallan several times, not only familiar with army commanding but also very knowledgeable of enemy tactics. At the same time, he was from the Capital City's Glory family, with extensive experience, capable of suppressing chiefs from various tribes, making him the best choice for Commander-in-Chief.

Following that, Aweit personally led the last four royal legions, thirty-two thousand royal warriors, to the northern Reed Marsh City, pressuring the southern Vastek tribes.

Thousands of Mexica legions rapidly approached, causing great panic among the Vastek tribes. The King dispatched envoys all the way to the ancestral land of the Vastek people in the south, Crow City, located three hundred miles east of Reed Marsh City, five hundred miles east of Lake Capital City.

As the suzerain, Aweit demanded that leaders from the southern Vastek tribes come to pay tribute and provide some food for the army!

Crow City was the gathering place for various eastern coastal Vastek tribes, Papantla, Papantla, meaning "place surrounded by crows." It was a densely populated, very prosperous small town, located in lowland jungles, with humid and hot climate, suitable for spice cultivation; it especially produced delicious vanilla beans!

Upon hearing the summons from the Mexica King, southern Vastek tribal leaders argued for several days, hesitating and undecided. Meanwhile, the northern ancestral land, Otter City, was battling southern Canine Descendants, unable to support southern tribes.

Finally, the leaders hardly reached a consensus under the persuasion of the southern Vastek Leader, "Silver Raven" Papata. They brought trusted aides and food, arriving at Tree Wall Town, Huauchinango, Huauchinango, dozens of miles east of Reed Marsh City, to pay tribute to the nominal suzerain, the Mexica King.

In the spacious wooden house, Aweit sat high on the throne, accepting the kneeling rites of many leaders. He was expressionless, indifferent and apathetic, delivering a speech to everyone.

"This is Huauchinango, a place where trees are abundant like walls, elegant and beautiful scenery. And in our Navajo language, 'Huauchinango' has another meaning, that is the 'Red Snapper' in the Eastern Great Lake. Priests from the capital city have told me, Red Snapper is like eastern coastal tribes. A male Red Snapper is surrounded by many female Red Snappers, forming a considerable school of fish. And this male Red Snapper is the tribe's leader, the female Red Snappers are the tribal warriors who listen to the leader."

Upon hearing this, the Vastek leaders showed surprise, feeling a bit uneasy. They had lived in lowland jungles for a long time, near the Eastern Great Lake, they had also tasted the delicious red snapper. If speaking of the habits of this fish, they knew far more than the Mexica.

"For a Red Snapper school, if the leader male Red Snapper dies, his 'wives' will sadly swim around him. As they swim, one sturdy 'wife' will turn from female to male! He will lead the entire school anew, as the tribe's leader, as the head of a household, leading the many 'wives' in a new life!"

Aweit said this, with a slight smile on his face, yet it revealed a divine-like chill.

"The male red snapper is dead, his tribe won't avenge him, only birth a new male red snapper... and if you die, your Vastec warrior subordinates won't avenge you either! Instead, they will elect a new leader to inherit all you have!"

"Ah! This, respected Mexica King... we are all tribal leaders loyal to you!..."

Upon hearing the King's words, the southern leaders of the Vastec people became extremely frightened, kneeling on the ground and begging for mercy.

Only "Silver Raven" Papata thought for a while, then respectfully knelt and called out.

"Supreme Mexica King, our Silver Raven Tribe is willing to join the Mexica Kingdom's army, participating in the war against the Tlaxcala! We're willing to gather tribal warriors, cross the vast Rainforest, and harass the Eastern Totonac people for you!"

"Hmm?"

Upon hearing this, Aweit's expression moved. He deeply looked at "Silver Raven" Papata for a few moments before faintly shaking his head.

"If the Eastern Totonac people dare to dispatch troops, they will be annihilated by the Alliance's army. As for you, the Kingdom indeed has a use."

Aweit smiled, his expression becoming gentle, calmly saying.

"You might as well bring your trusted aides, stay here, and together with the Mexica legion, garrison at Tree Wall Town!"

Thus, the southern Vastec leaders "voluntarily" stayed here to guard Tree Wall Town for the Mexica overlord. Aweit also left behind a Royal Legion, one part "protecting" the Vastec leaders, while suppressing the Alliance in the North. Meanwhile, the Vastec people's food supplies continued to be tributed.

Everything was arranged, and the army was about to move south. Before heading south, Aweit privately summoned "Silver Raven" Papata, and they held secret talks for half a day. Subsequently, he bestowed the Chief God's Amulet of the Golden Sun and a pouch of the Kingdom of the Lake's Turquoise as rewards for "Silver Raven."

At the beginning of March, after stabilizing the northern Vastec people, Aweit finally led three Royal Legions southward from Reed Marsh City. At this time, Casal had already led four City-State Armies, battling the northern rear guard of the Tlaxcalean army, killing a thousand samurai, and defeating several thousand militia.

The main forces of the Tlaxcaleans kept retracting southward, retreating to defend the core Four Snake City. Casal first controlled the western and northern areas of Feathered Serpent City, established a solid camp, crafted catapults, and blockaded around Feathered Serpent City. Then, he dispatched many scouts to observe enemy movements, waiting for the King's main forces to arrive.

In mid-March, Aweit arrived with the army beneath Feathered Serpent City. Seven alliance legions unfolded near Feathered Serpent City, covering over ten miles of wilderness, completely controlling the west side, north side, and east side of Feathered Serpent City. The only support route for the Tlaxcaleans was from the river's south side, crossing the river to supply the city.

At the end of March, Aweit divided a seasoned Royal Legion, including two copper armor samurai camps, and two longbow warrior camps, to cross the shallow southern river, Atenco River. This legion fought fiercely with the Tlaxcalean reinforcements, subsequently surrounding the south side of Feathered Serpent City, cutting off support from the other three snake cities. Thus, Feathered Serpent City was completely encircled by the Mexica army, cut off from supplies, becoming an isolated city...

"Ah! Heavenly Divine watching over the realm,

please tell me...

who are the descendants of the Divine?

Who is the true warrior?"

The bonfire blazed brightly, illuminating countless joyful faces; the night wind was warm, blowing the war clothes of thousands of samurai. At this moment, tens of thousands of Mexica warriors gathered in the great camp. They ate corn tortillas and sang the warrior's ballad, filled with the grandeur and power of conquest!

Aweit straightened up and listened. After a moment, his face revealed a genuine smile. The song was proud and firm, brimming with vigorous vitality. It was like the robust growth of a water fir, like the backbone of the Mexica people, standing tall and straight, never bending in the slightest!

Chapter 892: The Eastern Expedition of the Northern Route Army, Banquet and Congratulations

The bold singing echoed throughout the entire army camp, spreading for miles, causing the spring rain to cease.

The priest leader of Cholula, the elderly Petl, slowly stood up from the corner of the camp. Following the footsteps of a few royal guards, he walked out of the simple tent. The royal guards were clad in copper armor, their footsteps clanging, drawing Petl's careful gaze as he pondered.

Soon, the rousing songs of the samurai reached the ears of the old priest leader. He couldn't help but pause briefly, his eyes narrowing like a fox's.

"Ah! The War God descends from the Divine Kingdom,

Promising the glory of the Mexica people...

Who are the descendants of the Divine?

He is the Mexica King!

Who is the true warrior?

He is the hero of the Mexica people!

..."

Petl pursed his lips, lost in deep thought. After a while, he exhaled a long breath, sighed deeply, and his face returned to calm.

Inside the grand tent, Aweit laughed heartily. He raised his wine cup and shouted loudly to all the generals.

"May the Chief Divine bless! Come, drink this cup in full, to celebrate our warriors!"

"May the Chief Divine bless! Celebrate the King! Celebrate the nobility! Celebrate the warriors!"

Casal slightly bowed, a respectful smile on his face, saluting the King at the head, and then raised his cup to the nobles on either side. Following this, Clan Leader Izel from the mountains also lowered his head, being the second to praise.

"May the Chief Divine bless! The Sun God descends to the mortal realm, transforming into the supreme King! Under the King's rule, nobles and warriors from all states are willing to sacrifice themselves fearlessly for the King!"

"Indeed! May the Chief Divine bless! Praise the King, willing to give my life for you!"

No matter their true thoughts, the faces of all the Legion Commanders were filled with smiles at this moment. They respectfully offered their prayers, saluted the King altogether, and drank the thin wine in their hands.

"Haha! The Alliance is united in will. Unifying the world is almost within reach! By then, all generals will be rewarded!"

Aweit laughed heartily, finished his drink contentedly in one go. Then, he waved his hand boldly, signaling the generals to relax, and then sat cross-legged directly on the carpet. Not far outside the tent, the Feathered Serpent City burned with flames that hadn't extinguished for days. This fire, in the King's eyes, looked like beautiful fireworks, filling his heart with joy and serenity.

In early April, the main force of the Northern Route Army began to siege the Feathered Serpent City, focusing on attacking the flat western and northern sides.

More than twenty catapults were constructed, continuously hurling fiery balls. Large groups of royal bow samurai, armored, shot arrows, causing heavy casualties among the elite of the defending army on the city walls. Following that, squads of city-state militia were sent out, sacrificing their lives to deplete the arrows, stones, wood, and ash pots in the city. And the various city-state warrior camps took turns deploying to fight fiercely against the enemy on the city walls.

At the end of April, good news first came from the Divine Pass. Giant Bear Stanley had besieged for several months, tying down the defending army of the Weisoqinke state. Then, Prince Iskali of the end moon and Prince Tepopolo united, leading four thousand domestic warriors over the dangerous Eastern Madre Mountains, breaking into the heart of the Weisoqinke state, launching a surprise attack on the pass city from south to north.

The two sides attacked from north and south, and with the bombardment from the Divine Eagle Cannon, they captured the fortress group of the Divine Pass. Stanley suffered over two thousand casualties among royal warriors, over four thousand elite militia, killed seven thousand Tlaxcala defenders and captured more than ten thousand militia. Most of the captured militia had been bombarded by the Divine Eagle Cannon for many days, fearing the great power of the War God, and finally surrendered.

After several months of bloody fighting, with heavy casualties, the army finally captured the pass city. The resolute resistance of the Tlaxcala people, and the fierce siege by the Mexica, all speak volumes.

The Weisoqinke state has about two hundred thousand population, able to mobilize seven thousand Tlaxcala warriors and twenty to thirty thousand able-bodied militia. After this battle, the Tlaxcala warriors lost more than half, and the able-bodied men also suffered nearly half of casualties. As for the

remaining over ten thousand defenders, they all huddled in the capital of the Weisoqinke state, Oak Tree City.

Upon receiving the good news, Aweit, invigorated, exclaimed "Good" three times in a row. He ordered Giant Bear Stanley and Prince Iskali to combine forces, continue the southern attack, clearing out various divisions in the Weisoqinke state, then siege Oak Tree City. Next, Stanley's most important task was to promptly send people to transport six siege engines, the Sun Divine Eagle Cannons, to the camp of Feathered Serpent City!

The Divine Eagle Cannon was quite heavy, not easy to transport through the mountain roads, and was still on the way. However, the royal warriors had escorted several Divine Descendant nobility and some flags of the Divine Pass to the camp in time. Aweit immediately ordered to bring the captives and banners to the city to show the defenders.

"The western city-states, the southern city-states, have all fallen! You have no reinforcements!"

Struck by this blow, the morale of the defenders visibly declined. The fierce fighting continued under Feathered Serpent City for days, from early April into the end of the month, and into the early days of May. The tenaciously defended Feathered Serpent City finally fell today! At this point, of the four core snake cities of Tlaxcala, only three remained, several miles apart, supporting each other.

Just now, Aweit calculated the total casualties of the army, deeply moved upon hearing the numbers.

Sieging a Feathered Serpent City cost a total of four hundred royal warriors, more than three thousand city-state warriors, and eight thousand city-state militia. Combined, there were an astonishing twelve thousand! Whereas the Tlaxcala suffered four thousand warriors killed, five hundred warriors captured, and over eight thousand militia able-bodied men either dead or surrendered. The Mexica's casualties in attacking this fortress were almost equal to those of the Tlaxcala!

"The Tlaxcala dared to rely on natural barriers, refusing to surrender, fighting desperately against the Alliance army!"

With this thought, Aweit's face darkened, his heart filled with killing intent.

"In that case, let's wipe out these bow-wielding descendants of the Cloud Serpent!"

The King drank a few glasses of tequila, allowing his thoughts to wander far. The situation of the three southern snake cities once again came into his mind.

"Forty miles southwest of the Feathered Serpent City, relying on the undulating mountains, are the remaining three snake cities. The southernmost is Ocotelulco, Tree Snake City. Tree Snake City is farthest from the mountains, set on plains, should be the easiest to attack. To the east is Tizatlán, White Snake City. White Snake City is northward towards the mountains, on a higher terrain, situated on hills, relatively tricky..."

"And the most difficult and formidable is the ancestral land and the strongest fortress of the Tlaxcala, the cloud snake city built on the mountain, Tepetícpac-Texcallan, Cloud Serpent City!"

Thinking of Cloud Serpent City, Aweit's brows furrowed continually, almost forming a line. The Cloud Serpent City is a truly formidable mountain city; though not large in area, it occupied a relative height of two hundred meters. To attack such a mountain city, the warriors would have to climb the two-hundred-meter mountain path under rolling stones and arrows, and then look up attacking the fortress on the mountain...

"Praise the Mexica Chief Divine! The supreme Mexica King, the Holy City of Cholula, priest leader Petl, greets you as a descendant of the ancient Toltec people!"

The elderly Petl opened the tent door and walked into the grand tent, the sharp scent of wine rushing in, mingled with the deafening clamor of the generals. Petl felt disdain in his heart, yet his face was full of respect.

"Hmm? The priest leader of the Holy City of Cholula?"

Upon hearing this, all the generals in the grand tent instantly became quiet.

The priest leader of the Holy City of Cholula's status is roughly equivalent to the High Priest of the Alliance's priesthood, both situated at the pinnacle of divine authority. Of course, while the priest leader of Cholula holds a noble position, he doesn't possess much real power and can't intervene much in

various divisions of the world. However, the High Priest of the Lake Capital City truly holds half the Alliance's power, capable of obliterating a tribe with a single word!

"Haha! Priest Leader Petl, why have you come so late?"

Aweit looked askance at the elderly Petl. Then he waved his hand, with a hint of wine on his breath, coldly commanding.

"Today is a grand celebration, enjoying it together with the generals. Come! Move to the center of the grand tent! Dance and celebrate for me and the many great generals!"

Chapter 893: Divine Object, Ring of Eternal Wisdom

"What? Let the Priest Leader Petl dance in the tent to congratulate the King and the generals?"

Upon hearing the King's words, the large tent instantly fell silent. The clear campfire flickered within the tent, illuminating the contours of everyone's faces, sketching out contrasting expressions.

Aweit smiled faintly, looking towards the Priest Leader from Cholula. In the eyes of the generals, some were surprised, some playful, some full of pride, and very few just calmly scrutinizing.

"This!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Leader Petl's eyes widened, a surge of anger rising within him.

Instinctively, he grasped the valuable Turquoise Necklace around his neck, feeling the warmth of the Divine Object, suppressing the intense emotions raging inside. He is the leader of the Holy City, high on the Throne of the Gods, for thirty years. Throughout, which Divine Descendant Nobility of the city-states or Elder Priest of the tribes dared to be disrespectful towards him?!

"Hmm?"

Aweit squinted at the priest leader before him, coldly and dangerously asking.

"What, you are unwilling?"

"Ah, this..."

The King's unabashed murderous intent swept over, causing Petl to shiver all over. He looked around, at the armored Mexica generals, at those towering figures, fierce and dangerous faces... At this moment, Petl felt like a lone fox among a Jagaur pack, his hands and feet trembling slightly, a chill running down his spine.

"Honored Mexica King..."

Petl pursed his lips, bowing to the King as he quickly pondered.

"No, I cannot perform this dance. If I do, the name of the Holy City Cholula will be utterly tarnished!"

The priest leader was anxious. He racked his brains, starting to procrastinate.

"...I am old, with mobility problems, unable..."

Aweit, expressionless, reached for the Obsidian Long Dagger at his waist, coldly asking again.

"You, are unwilling?"

"...Ah! Supreme, all-ruling Mexica King!"

Petl gritted his teeth, showing a respectful smile. He bowed deeply, almost level with the ground.

"Last night, I suddenly dreamed of the War God! He stood tall on the sacred Snake Mountain, conveying the will of the Gods!"

"Hmm?"

Upon hearing this, Aweit raised an eyebrow. He gazed at the elder priest leader, still grasping the undrawn long dagger. The generals in the tent showed great interest, watching to see what this old priest could say.

"...The War God, atop the pantheon, shone magnificently, truly unforgettable..."

Petl slightly raised himself, his face reflecting a memory, as if he had truly witnessed the glory of the War God in his dream. He subtly acknowledged the War God's status as the Chief Divine, then continued to praise Him.

"The War God told me that He had long foreseen Your Majesty's conquest of the strong Feathered Serpent City today! He blesses the Mexica chosen by the Gods and punishes the lost Tlaxcala. This eastern campaign shall inevitably end in the victory of the War God's descendants! For it is the will of the War God, not to be defied!"

"Mm..."

Upon hearing this, the generals in the tent relaxed a bit. Most nodded in agreement, trusting in the War God's protection.

Several days ago, Petl had hurriedly traveled north from the Holy City, discreetly taking a detour to conceal his movements from the Tlaxcala nobility. Although the nobles of various Tlaxcala city-states had always treated him with great respect and often presented offerings, at this clear juncture, what needed to be abandoned must be decisively discarded, and what could be betrayed, swiftly sold out.

Then, Petl raised his head, looking at King Aweit respectfully. His voice boomed, his face displaying practiced devotion.

"Most High King, you are the Divine Descendant chosen by the War God, destined ruler of the world! The Holy City Cholula has already received a Divine Revelation, recognizing you as the sacred of the

world. All the Elder Priests are willing to proclaim it to the world!... I, too, am willing to exert my meager power to admonish the misguided Tlaxcala tribes, urging them to follow the sacred way!..."

"Oh? Chosen by the War God, ruler of the world? To spread fame and admonish the tribes?..."

Aweit squinted again, contemplating the words of the Holy City leader, as the cold murderous intent slowly vanished. After a moment, he suddenly smiled, gazing meaningfully at Petl's neck and spoke.

"Petl, Priest Leader, your Turquoise Necklace seems to have a divine nature, quite familiar to me."

"Ah..."

Petl started slightly, a tremor running through his heart.

In the mythologies inherited over two millennia in Central America, Turquoise symbolized wisdom and immortality and was the most revered gemstone, believed to possess divinity since the Olmec era. The Turquoise Necklace around his neck, called the "Circle of the Wise and Everlasting", was the most precious Divine Object of the Holy City Cholula, passed down from the ancient Toltec Empire to this day!

"...Supreme Mexica King, you are the Divine King chosen by All Gods, you should wear the most precious Divine Object, inherit the most ancient divinity!"

Gazing at Aweit's squinting eyes, Petl steeled himself. He gritted his teeth and carefully removed the necklace from his neck.

"This Turquoise Necklace, called the 'Circle of the Wise and Everlasting', is a gem renowned throughout the world since the Toltec Era! It consists of 20 Turquoises the size of pigeon eggs. Each Turquoise is of exceptional hardness, smooth and delicate, showing a pure sky blue, symbolizing the blessing of the Divine Kingdom's All Gods!"

The bright firelight fell on the necklace's pure hue, revealing its natural shallow engravings, flickering with a warm and captivating luster!

Seeing this, the Mexica generals in the tent were astonished. They were of honorable nobility by birth, naturally knowing that the quality of this level of Turquoise was exceedingly rare in the world! Even the stable Lake Gem, compared to this, is two whole levels inferior. Such beautiful gems must be a Divine Object passed down in various city-states and never appear on the market!

"Supreme King, 'Circle of the Wise and Everlasting', was personally crafted by a Toltec High Priest who received a Divine Revelation five hundred years ago. Since then, it has been worn on the necks of generations of Holy City priest leaders, passed down for nearly five hundred years! The necklace contains enduring divinity and abounds with the blessing of All Gods..."

At this point, the priest leader Petl glanced around, his face revealing a sacred expression. Then, he stepped forward two steps, came before King Aweit, slowly knelt on one knee, holding up the necklace with both hands, chanting as if revering the gods.

"You, the God-King destined to conquer the world! You are the Divine Descendant of the Toltecs, possessing the noble blood! ...Please wear this precious Divine Object, carrying forth the Toltec's honor, ever-ruling the world!"

"Mm... Circle of the Wise and Everlasting, Toltec Divine Object... Conquerer, God-King..."

Looking at the priest leader kneeling before him, Aweit's mouth gradually curled into a smile. Although Mexica people claim to be descendants of the Toltecs, the true origins of the tribes are an open secret to all. Yet such a long-inherited Divine Object could indeed substantiate the alliance's theory of ruling the world.

"Haha! Petl, Priest Leader, you truly are a clever man!"

After a half moment, Aweit burst into hearty laughter, extremely joyous. The atmosphere in the tent immediately relaxed. The generals also laughed. Then, the King reached out, took the priceless Turquoise Necklace, played with it a bit, then casually tossed it beside his seat.

"Since so, sit by my side and watch the generals dance!"

"Phew..."

Priest Leader Petl exhaled deeply, glanced painfully at the Turquoise Necklace, then lowered his head and carefully sat beside the King. His back pressed against the ceremonial dress, feeling a rush of damp heat, only to suddenly realize his whole body was already drenched in sweat!

Chapter 894: Offering Dance to the Generals

In the tent, the feast was in full swing, and the bamboo flute resounded. The firelight sparkled in their eyes, and the aroma wafted at their noses. The generals, with their bellies full and half-drunk from wine, reached the stage of dance and song.

According to the Alliance's tradition, after a great victory, the Samurai must perform a war dance and sing poetry to bless the esteemed tribal Leaders. Well, this custom is somewhat akin to the Shang dynasty's noblemen wielding weapons, performing the great Huo dance to offer sacrifices to Cheng Tang. Or like the Liao Dynasty's Emperor spring hunting, holding a feast with the first fish, letting the Jurchen Chieftains offer their dance.

"Xiuxoke, with Stanley absent, among the generals present, you shall lead... let's start with you!"

King Aweit glanced around at the generals, smiling lightly, and first called upon the Deputy Head of the Eagle Warrior Battalion, his relative Xiuxoke. Xiuxoke nodded respectfully and stood up. His figure had grown prosperous, with a double chin, and he looked genial, lacking the appearance of a Warrior. Indeed, during this Northern Campaign, Xiuxoke did not hold military power but was in charge of the army's logistics, overseeing food supplies transport.

"...I battled in the Southern City; I died in the Northern City!"

The corpse lay exposed in the wilderness, drawing a crowd of crows pecking.

I spoke mockingly to the crows, asking them to mourn for the Warriors!

Caw caw caw!...

Dying in the wild, no burial needed,

Dying for the Gods, the soul journeys to the Divine Kingdom.

And our bodies, willingly offered to you all!

Caw caw caw!..."

Xiuxoke slightly raised his head, looking westward to his hometown. He stretched his arms like a dancing plump crow, singing the sorrowful, tragic poetry, while imitating the cawing of death, portraying a Poet's demeanor.

This imagery of intertwining death and generosity is most revered by the Alliance Warriors. After hearing it, the generals were somewhat moved. Evidently, the Deputy Head of the Eagle Warrior Battalion, though not skilled in slaughter, is an excellent Poet.

King Aweit was a bit surprised. He nodded, his face showing appreciation.

"Xiuxoke, what is the name of this poem?"

"Ahem... the poem is titled 'Battle South of the City.' I witnessed Warriors attacking Feathered Serpent City, bodies falling like rain, some not even buried, thus inspired, I composed this yesterday!"

Xiuxoke responded calmly, without blushing or a beat, exuding the calm confidence of a true Poet.

"Hmm, not bad, not bad! Come, drink this cup!"

King Aweit raised his wine glass and drank it down with his relative.

"To the fallen Warriors!"

"To celebrate the King! To celebrate the Warriors!"

The generals all raised their glasses in unison, drinking heartily, and the atmosphere turned lively.

After drinking, Xiuxoke bowed his head in salute and returned to his seat, his belly preceding him. He looked slightly pensive, sighing gently in his heart.

"Alas. In the Capital City, it's hard to stand as a Warrior, so reluctantly, I must excel as a Poet... Hmm, my son's childhood poems are all neatly kept; there are many usable ones..."

"Casal, it's your turn next!"

King Aweit sat cross-legged, smiling as he looked at the Northern Route Army's Deputy Marshal, Commander Casal. Speaking of the seniority among the generals present, Casal was indeed the most seasoned. Unfortunately, he followed the wrong King before and had no outstanding son, leading to his long period of neglect.

"Yes, supreme King!"

Casal respectfully stood up and first saluted the King. Then he crouched slightly, using his limbs forcefully, leaping into an ancient Samurai war dance, singing an ancient sacrificial poetry.

"...The sacred Chief Divine illuminates the Divine Descendants,

Those high and mighty will walk their paths.

On this path is full of slaughter and expedition!

...The supreme King seated on the Throne of the Gods,

waves frozen wings in the Clouds,

letting flames descend from the heights of the sky!

...He will wage war, He will conquer all people,

He lets the flames descend to earth, raging in the dust-stirred land!

...Fire and Thunderbolt, war and death,

He is the Divine Descendant incarnate as the Sun, the sacred Mexica King!

..."

Upon hearing Casal's poetry, the faces of the generals became subtly complex. This handed-down poetry, originally praising the War God and the Samurai, was now modified into a praise for the King.

"Haha!"

King Aweit laughed heartily, with a joyful expression. He looked at the vigorously dancing Casal and nodded with satisfaction.

"Hmm, Casal, you have intention! Come, and drink a cup with me!"

"Thank you for the wine, King!"

Casal kneeled on one knee, saluting deeply. Then he took the wine and drank it carefully, without spilling a drop. After the defeat of the previous King Tizoc, he was confined to his home, stripped of all military power, languishing for full six years! It wasn't until this Eastern Campaign that he finally earned King Aweit's trust and was reinstated.

These six years of experience were enough to smooth any edges, turning a proud Divine Descendant Commander into a cautious King's eagle hound.

"Hmm, 'Flowery Carving' Chilto, 'Dead Dog' Chichimequi! Come, dance for me!"

Upon hearing the call, the young and strong 'Flowery Carving' and 'Dead Dog' stood up together, clenching fists on their chests, saluting the King. In the Navajo language, Chilto "chiltotot!" means "colorful raptor"; Chichimequi "chichimicqui" means "death hound," or, well, dead dog.

Both were royal Warriors promoted in recent years, each commanding an 8,000-strong Royal Legion; they are the King's true "eagle hounds"! Though both come from minor nobility, their loyalty to the King is undoubtedly the highest among the generals present.

"Supreme King, we are willing to die for you! Roar!"

'Flowery Carving' and 'Dead Dog' roared in unison, then rolled up their War Clothes to reveal their sturdy arms. Then, the two began fiercely wrestling and performing an intense war dance at the same time.

"...Crimson flowers bloom on the battlefield.

Sacrificial flowers bloom on the battlefield,

Bonfire flowers bloom on the battlefield!...

Our only flower,

is the blossoming flower of war,

blooming in death, burning everything in the world to ashes!

..."

The impassioned Warrior song, accompanied by heavy footsteps, echoed in the great tent. Watching the intense dance and listening to the heroic and fierce song, everyone's eyes were filled with excitement.

"...Nava All Gods!..."

Seeing the continuous war dances in the tent, listening to the poetry praising war and death, Priest Leader Petl slightly lowered his head, quietly clutching his sleeve.

"These Aztecs, born from the Wilderness, barbaric and warlike!... Alas! Chichimec, Toltec... the barbarians outside the city have ultimately overwhelmed the civilized people inside the city..."

"Chichimec" literally means nomadic barbaric tribes. Whereas "Toltec" is considered a term for the civilized urban ethnic group. As for "Aztecs," it naturally is a derogatory term for Wilderness Tribes, "Barbarians from Aztlan."

"Great! Absolutely splendid!"

King Aweit's face showed pleasure as he watched his Warriors' offering dance, reveling in the power held in his hands! He watched for a long time, until both generals were panting and sweating, then laughed out loud and exclaimed in praise.

"Come, my valiant eagle hounds, drink this cup with me, fully enjoy this moment of exhilaration!"

"Yes, supreme King!"

'Flowery Carving' and 'Dead Dog' stopped their war dance, kneeling respectfully on the ground, paying a great homage. Then they received the wine handed personally by the King, drank it in one gulp, soaking even their collars.

"Good! Good! Drink more!"

King Aweit cheered twice, gave the two generals another cup of wine, and then let them retire. Next, his smile unwavering, he looked towards four honorable nobility, the Legion Commanders of the City-State Army.

"'Tzompantli' Xochitl, 'Luwei' Xintle, 'Canyon Gold' Pachjo, 'Mountains' Izel. Who among you will come first?"

Chapter 895: Obedience and Life or Death

Outside the tent, the samurai sang joyously, and the bamboo flute played. Inside, the war dance had just paused, and the fragrance of alcohol filled the air. The King smiled and inquired, causing all the generals to straighten up, instantly falling silent.

"Sing and dance..."

The four Legion Commanders of the City-States looked at each other, their expressions somewhat awkward. Each governed a region, being the most honorable nobility in their City-State, wielding real power at the local level, and their word was law. One could say they were the true masters of their respective States and were always the ones watching others perform, rarely performing for others themselves.

The Commanders became quiet, feeling a bit discontent. According to the oldest traditions of the Alliance, the Mexica King was the Great Tlatoani, and they were the lesser Tlatoanis, representing the different rankings of leaders within the Tribal Alliance, unlike the Celestial Empire's strict sovereign and minister relationship.

Especially the aged Clan Leader of the "Acid Wood," from the noble family in Tepanecapan, Xochitl. He was in his fifties or sixties, had controlled his City-State for twenty years, and resided in the distant Tzompantli City. The last time he danced for a Venerable was eleven years ago, at an elder's eightieth birthday. But that elder was the immortal Sun, a great figure who shaped the Alliance, a heroic spirit in the living world!

"Hmm... The King of the Capital City, and the leaders of the States..."

Chief Priest Petl squinted his eyes, pondering silently like an old fox. Observing the situation within the tent, he gained a deeper understanding of the power distribution within the Mexica.

"Good! Honored King, I am the youngest, and daringly, I shall first sing and dance for you!"

After a moment of silence, Izel stood up first. Smiling broadly, he bowed to the King, then glanced at the other three Commanders before stepping to the center of the grand tent. Then, holding a blunt wooden stick in one hand and a shield in the other, he began the sacrificial dance of the Mountain Family.

"Ah! Majestic and towering mountains,

you are the throne of the War God!

You shine radiantly, with a glacier gleaming forehead,

you are steady and heavy, with stone-like standing stature,

you are indestructible, with granite-like thighs,

you are blessed by the Divine, with a golden heart!

...you are the glory of the Mountain Family,

entrusted with the ancient and brave spirit.

And now, you slightly bow your head,

in homage to the ruling King,

that is the divinely blessed Mexica King!

..."

Hearing this, the remaining three Legion Commanders lowered their eyes, cursing inwardly. Izel had actually dedicated the sacrificial song and dance of the Mountain Family to the King! This not only represented complete submission, but also placed them all in a difficult position.

"Good! Very good!"

Aweit stood tall, praising with satisfaction.

"Izel of the Mountain Family is a truly honorable warrior! He captured the Lord of Feathered Serpent City alive, earning the first merit in this battle! Come, let us raise a toast to celebrate the warrior!"

"...to the King, to the warrior!"

Everyone raised their cups, drinking the complex-tasting liquor. Izel smiled, returning the salute to the crowd, then glanced at the three other Legion Commanders before retaking his seat.

"...Honored King, you led us to conquer the City-States of our ancient enemies! Allow me to dance for you!"

After a while, the Reed Clan Chief, Xintle, stood up second. He hailed from the Northeast Atotonilco State, and his family had been engaged in lifelong battles with the nearby Telascalans, harboring deep hatred. Meanwhile, Aweit led the grand army eastward, crushing enemies along the way, avenging the City-State thoroughly.

"...I hear the song of the reeds,

on the hills of sunrise and sunset,

in the swamps where water and sky meet!

I drink the blood-red river,

quenching my thirst with the unquenchable.

Then, I shall walk onto the battlefield,

fighting for loyalty and the King,

dying for glory and the Chief Divine!

..."

Xintle finished his song softly, then danced a mournful sacrificial dance of the swaying reeds, before bowing his head in homage to the King. His expression was respectful and sincere.

"Good! The Luwei Family is the Divine Descendant of the Northeast Alliance, a loyal servant of the Royal Family! Come, Xintle, drink with me!"

Examining the expression of the counterpart carefully, Aweit nodded in satisfaction, drinking the fine wine deeply.

The eastern divine war saw the royal army passing through Atotonilco State, shaking the entire State. Together with capturing a northern stronghold of Tlaxcala, the local nobility within the City-States was thoroughly subdued by the Royal Family. Next up...

"...I hear the wild wind on the cliffs and in the woods!

I fight in the wilderness of the wind, till my chest is torn open!

You will see my beating heart, flowing with vibrant life...

it is ready to dedicate to the faith in the Chief Divine, to the invincible King!"

Clan Leader of the "Jin Shi", the honorable noble Pachjo, stood up, performed a family sacrificial dance, then bowed to the King, drank the rice wine, and quietly stepped back down.

"The invincible King..."

Aweit slightly raised his eyebrows, took a sip, and his thoughts stirred. The Clan Leader of "Jin Shi" performed a family sacrificial dance, praising the Chief Divine, which was still quite obedient. Of course, this obedience required the King to have glorious martial achievements... He shifted his gaze, softly resting on the aged Divine Descendant, Clan Leader of the "Acid Wood," Xochitl.

Given the situation, Xochitl could only rise slowly, bowing to the King. He removed his feather crown, revealing his graying hair, pursed his lips, and held the heavy wooden club in both hands. He did not carry a shield but instead began a fierce Macuahuitl Dance. This was not a sacrificial dance of the Acid Wood Family but a warrior's battle dance.

"...Swinging the war club, with the glory of Obsidian!

The brave samurai will battle for honor.

Like an eagle, like a tiger. Like jade, like stone.

Fight! Fight! Fight to the ends of the sky!

Until the Obsidian is worn down, until the war club breaks,

until with endless blood,

I repay the Divine who granted me life!

..."

Upon finishing the song, Xochitl bowed slightly and drank a cup of tequila, showing a certain degree of obedience.

"Hmm. Not bad! Though the Acid Wood Clan Leader is aged, his skill remains agile, worthy of being a distinguished samurai of the West!"

Aweit unemotionally smiled and praised, drinking a cup with Xochitl. Simultaneously, he silently put a period on the sentence of Xochitl's fate in his mind...

"Hmm, it's time, during this eastward divine war, to replace the Clan Leader of the Acid Wood Family."

After the four Legion Commanders completed their dances, the tent atmosphere became merry and lively again. The generals toasted each other, sang enthusiastically, filled with the samurai's masculinity and confidence. In this eastward campaign, the enemy Telascallans were beaten powerless, only able to cower defensively within their cities, truly exhilarating. The great Mexica Alliance would undoubtedly triumph, conquering the East in one sweep!

The night descended and dispersed, unknowingly it was already dawn. The generals drank merrily till dawn, long since deeply drunk. At the banquet's conclusion, Aweit raised the Divine Staff high, observing the drunken generals around him, and laughed aloud.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise the Ancestors! The victory in the eastward campaign is a decree from the gods! Roar!"

"Roar, all praise the King! Roar, eastward conquest certain victory! Roar roar!"

The generals responded loudly, howling fervently like wild beasts. The banquet thus concluded, and the revelry quickly dispersed. However, the flames of the eastward campaign would not cease, continuing to

blaze throughout the valley until the destruction of the ancestral land of the Telascalans, the remaining three Snake Cities!

Soon, the grand tent fell silent. The dawn's light seeped through the tent, bringing faint brightness, like a glimpse of distant life force. Cholula Priest Leader Petl sat by the fire, watching the glimmers at the top of the tent, contemplating repeatedly in his mind.

Aweit sat up straight, drank a cup of honey water handed over by Gillim, his drunkenness cleared from his eyes. Then, he looked at the Chief Priest waiting respectfully across the fire, and casually asked.

"Petl, when will the Holy City of Cholula open its gates and surrender?"

Chapter 896: King and Priest, Jaguar and Fox

The cold morning wind blew down from the high dome, brushing over the dying campfire, bringing a hint of chill. Beneath the dome, by the campfire, sat two Divine Descendants, one elder and one strong, facing each other.

"Most exalted Mexica King, please, like an obsidian mirror, witness the goodwill of the holy city Cholula."

Chief Priest Petl smiled genuinely, bowing humbly in salute.

"The holy city Cholula has never fought the powerful Mexica Alliance, so why speak of surrender?"

"Hmm? Never an enemy?"

Upon hearing such shameless words, even the seasoned Aweit couldn't help but laugh.

"Cholula dispatched warriors to join the Tlaxcala side and sent envoys to gather tribes from all over the land to fight the Alliance... Why still deny enmity?"

"Your Majesty, I ask for your insight."

Petl replied calmly and slowly, smiling.

"Within the holy city Cholula, the priestly families are all noble Toltec Divine Descendants, whereas those tribal warriors who fought are barbaric Tlaxcallans. They obey the Tlaxcala nobility within their nation, not the holy city's commands. As for the envoys to tribes across the world, they only sought aid for the holy city, never to fight the Alliance... The holy city has only reverence and admiration for the Alliance, no enmity!"

"Oh? No enmity?... Haha!"

Aweit laughed aloud, unwilling to argue with words. The powerful Jaguars ruled the jungle by force, not words. He reached out his Divine Staff, heavily pointing it at Petl's heart, coldly and sternly commanding.

"Now, Divine Pass and Feathered Serpent City have all fallen, and the Tlaxcala heartlands are exposed! The Alliance's northern army of a hundred thousand is about to march south! Meanwhile, the southern army of eighty thousand will move north! The two hundred thousand troops will merge in Cholula City for a grand sacral ceremony!... Since the priestly families are noble Divine Descendants of the city, offer your hearts in sacrifice to the exalted Chief Divine!"

"Ah!... Most exalted Mexica God King, please quell your anger..."

Petl's face paled, bowing deeply, pleading with the dignified ruler above. Even though he suspected it was intimidation, he still trembled. For the barbaric Aztecs had the ability to capture the holy city and were accustomed to grand sacrifices. The threat, therefore, held real dignity!

"You are Lord of the World, as well as... the spiritual leader of the holy city Cholula!"

Petl paused, then spoke with difficulty. Indeed, he initially had no intention of submission, merely seeking a semi-dependent alliance. But the situation changed too swiftly; the Tlaxcalans resisted for less than six months before losing the crucial southern and northern towns. Even if all tribes united, they might not save...

"The holy city Cholula is willing to submit to you, joining the great Mexica Alliance. All priestly families are willing to exert all their power for your conquest of the world, offering the strength bestowed by the Divine!"

"Ha! Divine gifts? The Mexica have long mastered Divine gifts!"

Aweit stood up, looking down arrogant at the aging priest leader.

"The Alliance is divinely protected, possessing the glorious holy city of the Teotihuacan Period, the High Priesthood of Twelve Elder Priests, and the thunder and fire bestowed by the Chief Divine! Why should I accept Cholula City, a group of decaying old remnants of the Toltec?"

Aweit had summoned Acap multiple times, fully aware of the luxurious and decayed conduct of Cholula's elders. From the depths of his heart, he despised these leaders of divine authority who could only manipulate minds but were powerless.

"Decayed and old, Toltec remnants..."

Upon hearing this, Petl felt a pang in his heart, as if a wound had been revealed. The so-called holy city Cholula and the priestly families were none other than a remnant group surviving on the glory of ancestors after the fall of the Toltec Empire... A few moments later, he gritted his teeth, steadied his spirit, and responded candidly.

"Yes, most exalted Mexica King! We are indeed a group of decaying old remnants of the Toltec. But between decaying old priest leaders indulging in luxury and reforming, decisive, ruthless High Priests, which do you prefer?"

Petl knelt on the ground, raising his head. He observed the sudden change in Aweit's eyes, smiling like an old fox.

"Exalted Divine King! The priests of Cholula wish to serve you as their lord. All we seek are divine smoking herbs, opulent clothing, exquisite food, beautiful maidens, merely to dwell in high positions, enjoying luxury!... But what does the High Priest of the Alliance seek instead?"

"The High Priest is frugal and simple, does not delight in pleasure nor in luxury, tirelessly busy in the Great Temple, wielding divine authority over the Mexica. He is renowned and resolute, able to decide the fate of thousands with a word, bringing extinction to dozens of Tlacopan nobility families... Even from afar in Cholula, I know the Mexica's reverence and obedience to him! How much more is their reverence towards him compared to you? The authority of the priests only grows deeper in hearts with time..."

Aweit narrowed his eyes, gripping the Scepter tightly, showing a chilling intent to kill. Meanwhile, without notice, Chief Intelligence Officer Gillim silently drew an obsidian dagger, approaching behind Petl.

The priest leader felt a chill on his back, yet seemed unaware. He only smiled slightly, locking eyes with the king, speaking like a cunning old fox.

Chapter 897: King and Priest, Jaguar and Fox_2

"...It is said that every time the sun rises and sets, a thunderous prayer rises from the Lake Capital City! The citizens of the capital reverently praise the Chief Divine, also extolling the High Priest! And the High Priest's legitimate grandson, is your son-in-law, the well-known heir of the Alliance! ... Now, while the immortal Elder still lives, he can suppress all within the Mexica Alliance, preventing chaos. Yet if the Mexica Elder passes away, then with the authority of the High Priest, coupled with the army of the Kingdom of the Lake..."

"O Supreme Divine King! How can a king ignore threats that lie close at hand? Once the Mexica Elder departs for the Divine Kingdom, just a single accident, a cup of poison, or a dagger aimed at you... then the royal power of the Mexica will solidly be passed down. And when divine authority and royal power are united, it will fall upon..."

"Silence!"

Aweit's expression changed dramatically. He lifted his foot and, with a sudden force, kicked Petl to the ground.

"You damned fellow, how dare you sow discord in the Alliance! I shall personally sacrifice you to the Chief Divine!"

"Cough, cough, cough!..."

Petl was kicked two meters away, falling to the ground, unable to rise for quite a while. However, upon seeing the king's furious display, he instead laughed more respectfully and sincerely.

"Your Majesty, please quell your anger..."

At some unknown time, Gillim had already put away the dagger. He solemnly saluted, saying nothing. The King, however, raised his eyebrows and fell into deep thought.

Priest Leader Petl got back up, once again kneeling respectfully on the ground, silently facing the pensive King.

"Phew..."

After a long while, Aweit lowered his eyes and calmed his anger. He glanced coldly at Petl, then turned around and sat cross-legged.

"Petl, you sly old fox! If you wish to keep your position and preserve the priests of Cholula... a few words are far from enough!"

"Ah, O Supreme Divine King! Even with my cloudy old eyes, I can clearly see that you are destined to conquer all tribes and rule the world!"

Petl respectfully offered a few sincere compliments, then spoke with a smile, having already gained confidence in his heart.

"In the eyes of the priests of the Holy City Cholula, you are the Divine King, not only ruling the mortal realm but also the Divine Kingdom! The priests of Cholula are willing to proclaim to the world, hold sacred ceremonies, and pledge their allegiance to you, to the Divine King!"

Aweit said nothing, listening calmly. However, he once again grasped the Yellow Gemstone Scepter in his hand, feeling the divine authority passed down among the tribes.

"In the world of the Nava religion, divinity is divided into two. One half resides in the place where the gods departed, the Holy City of Teotihuacan; the other half in the place of the gods' return, the Holy City of Cholula... The Mexica Alliance possesses both, thus sheltered by all gods, destined to rule the world! ... But if divine authority is divided, establishing two High Priesthoods, then the one above all is naturally the Supreme Divine King!"

"Hmm?..."

Aweit lowered his eyes, gripping the Divine Staff, his face showing no disturbance.

Gillim's expression flickered. Having followed the King for many years, he saw the King's interest, but there was still some hesitation. The Chief Intelligence Officer hesitated for a moment, weighing the pros and cons, then solemnly saluted and asked Petl.

"Leader Petl, in your opinion, if there is a conflict between the teachings of the Priesthood and the royal decrees, how should it be interpreted?"

Hearing this, Petl's spirit invigorated. At this crucial moment, with the support of the King's confidant, it seems the major affairs are about to be accomplished! He solemnly and respectfully responded.

"Both Holy Cities are under the rule of the Divine King; both Priesthoods should also pledge allegiance to the Divine King! If the teachings of the Priesthood differ from the royal decrees, naturally, the Divine King should be revered, and the Priesthood should reflect and correct! ... The Holy City of Cholula is willing to offer the Supreme Mexica King as the master of all powers!"

For centuries, though the Priesthood of Cholula held a revered status, controlling the Eastern Holy Land, it only controlled a single place. However, if it could be accepted by the Mexica Alliance, conquer all tribes along with the allied forces, and even share equal status with the High Priesthood...

Just the thought of such a scene filled Petl with immense excitement! Compared to this bright future, the current servility seemed trivial!

"Phew!..."

After a while, Aweit let out a long breath. He gazed at Petl without expression for a moment, then spoke indifferently.

"The Holy City of Cholula, having endured for hundreds of years, possesses the magnificent Great Pyramid of Cholula, the 'artificial mountain' Tlachihualtepetl!... The remnants of the Chief Divine are there, and I, blessed by divine protection, am unwilling to see its destruction by my own hand."

Upon hearing this, Petl was overjoyed. He removed his Feather Crown, lowered his gray-haired head, and offered a humble grand salute.

"Petl, leader of the Cholula priests, descendant of Toltec, divine descendant, pays homage to the Supreme Divine King!"

"Hmm!"

Aweit finally nodded. He looked at the old fox before him and questioned firmly.

"Cholula City, hold a submission ritual, proclaim to all tribes?"

The implication was clear. Petl smiled and nodded emphatically.

"Yes!"

"Surrender all the Tlaxcala divine descendants and nobility, calling the Tlaxcala people to submit?"

"Yes!"

Petl nodded again. The Tlaxcalans were already defeated, so they could be sold.

"Offer the Chief Divine as the main deity?"

"...Yes!"

Petl hesitated for a moment, but still nodded in agreement. The faith of the Mexica was gradually moving towards monotheism. To join the alliance, Cholula City had to agree to regard the Chief Divine as supreme. However, the reform towards monotheism might not be a bad thing. At least it would significantly strengthen the power of the Mexica priests.

"Hand over half of Cholula's state lands, half of its village population."

Aweit looked at Petl with stern expression. He did not use an interrogative tone but issued an unyielding Royal Decree.

"Ah? This, this...yes!"

Seeing the king's emotionless gaze, Petl hesitated twice before nodding bitterly in agreement.

"Supreme Divine King, Cholula City agrees to all your demands. Is it...?"

"Hmm, to have the Alliance accept Cholula, there is one final condition."

Aweit smiled slightly and straightened up. Seeing Petl's secretly pleased expression, murderous intent brewed in his heart.

"Petl, Cholula City has twelve elder priests just like the alliance?"

"Yes! Twelve is a noble and sacred number. The Priesthood of Cholula also consists of twelve elders."

Petl was somewhat puzzled, unsure why the king was asking this.

"Hmm! Cholula City hindered the eastward crusade of the alliance, offending the Chief Divine's majesty."

Aweit spoke with a calm expression and an unchanging voice, delivering his verdict.

"Then surrender two elder priests as sacrifices to the Chief Divine!"

"Ah!"

A piercing chill surged through Petl's heart, like a glacier upon the Divine Mountain, filling him with an overwhelming sense of dread for the first time.

"Sacrifice...the respected elder priests?"

"What, are you unwilling?"

Aweit smiled faintly, the corners of his mouth curling.

"Or do you wish to take the place of other elders to meet the Chief Divine?"

"Ah, no...no..."

Petl lay prostrate on the ground, shaking his head repeatedly. Even the most cunning fox must bow down to the merciless Jaguar! After a considerable while, he managed to respond with difficulty.

"Sacrifice the elder priests...yes!!"

Chapter 898: The Sunset of Mountain Peak City

"Oh, is there a sacrifice happening in Mountain Peak City?"

The sun rose to its peak, its scorching rays descending. Black Wolf Torc was clad in copper armor, holding a longbow, standing on a small hill, gazing at Mountain Peak City several hundred meters away.

Mountain Peak City wasn't large, with small hills flanking its west and south sides, offering a slight geographical advantage. To the east, a few miles away, ran a small river, lined with vast cultivated fields, making it a fertile land. The city itself was encircled by an earthen stone wall five or six meters high, surrounded by a sparse fence. Although the wall was somewhat low and the fence quite rudimentary, they formed a rough yet complete defense protecting the city's defending army. If the defending forces were sufficient and capable of an offensive, such a well-fortified city couldn't be conquered in just a day or two.

However, at this moment, on the north battlements of Mountain Peak City, there were only several hundred Tlaxcala Warriors and two or three thousand terrified militia. The warriors of Tepeyacac City-State mostly perished in Water Valley City. Those left in Mountain Peak City included just one or two thousand warriors and five or six thousand urgently mobilized able-bodied militia.

Most of the defending army on the battlements held hunting bows, javelins, and slings, occasionally shouting to intimidate the Mexica legion outside the city. However, the number of warriors was far too few, revealing the emptiness within the city. Behind the city walls stood the towering central pyramid, where dozens of Priests of the God of the Hunt ignited the Sacred Fire, frantically dancing and chanting, offering sacrifices of human lives from unknown origins.

At one glance, Black Wolf saw the dark city walls, white cloth armor, yellow flames, and red bloodstains, resembling a picture of spring blossoms.

"Tsk, tsk, it does appear quite decent! But, what's the point of sacrificing at this time?"

Black Wolf grinned broadly, revealing sharp teeth. Then, he waved his broad hand, excitedly wielding his longbow, his battle spirit burning like fire.

"Haha, it's rare that His Highness is not around! This Mountain Peak City, is it a soft persimmon or hard stone? Let me personally find out!"

"Alright! Leader, the legion's red-haired, will all join you! Once this whatever city is broken, the warriors will be... merry!"

"Hmm, pass the order down, let the warriors fight bravely! Break Mountain Peak City, plunder freely for two days, leave no nobility alive!"

"Awoo! Black Wolf Chieftain, good chieftain! Kill, kill, kill!"

Soon, the echoing wolf howls rose below Mountain Peak City, carrying undisguised murderous intent. Then, tens of thousands of Mexica troops surged forward like the tide, forming several military formations of varying sizes within two or three quarters of an hour. A banner featuring a Black Wolf was planted directly on the plain outside the north city, just two or three hundred meters from the battlements!

"Boom, boom, boom!..."

The deep war drums sounded, issuing the command to attack. The defending army on the battlements was terrified, watching the disciplined and advancing elite legion unfold.

Leading the way were two thousand Tlaxcala defectors, dressed similarly to those on the battlements, carrying simple wooden shields and ordinary short spears. They bore dozens of ladders, swiftly breaking through the wooden fence under the supervision of hundreds of Mexica warriors, rapidly approaching the battlements.

Behind the defectors were over six hundred armored red-haired Hunters, advancing almost simultaneously with the charging defectors.

These elite Divine Archers all wielded longbows, donned copper armor, wore copper helmets, showing no hint of wilderness barbarian lineage. Their equipment was far superior to that of ordinary Mexica warriors, all obtained by Black Wolf shamelessly requesting them from His Highness!

Black Wolf was high-spirited, standing right in the center of the red-haired Hunters. He personally led his armored personal guards in the attack on the north city wall, leaving the west city wall to Red Monkey Ozoma and the east city wall to Red Frog Kaka, simultaneously coordinating the assault.

"Hehe, this is called, uh, 'encircle three, leave one!'"

"Exactly! It's the same as hunting wild bulls in the wilderness, encircle three, drive one!"

The trusted aide Miwa chuckled foolishly, his bronzed equipment changing his appearance to be both clumsy and vigorous.

"Boom, boom, boom!..."

The war drums gradually quickened, the Tlaxcala defectors closed in on the battlements, quickly reaching within a hundred paces. The nobility commanding atop the battlements shouted orders, the defenders desperately launched assaults, shooting arrows, regardless of who the defectors below were. Actually, each city-state mostly cared for themselves, showing no leniency towards warriors of the same clan from other city-states!

"Ah!..."

The defectors wore only thin paper armor, after several rounds of attacks, corpses littered the ground, losing two or three hundred men. They screamed incoherently, emitting frenzied shouts, braving the continuous arrow rain, desperately setting the ladders against the battlements.

"Whizz, whizz, whizz!"

A volley of fierce feathered arrows rose from the red-haired military formation outside the north city wall, falling onto the low battlements. This wave of feathered arrows was exceptionally accurate, directly killing a dozen or so defending warriors and numerous militia!

"Charge! Kill!"

Black Wolf stood sixty paces from the battlements, facing the defending army's arrows. He raised his hand, shot an arrow straight into a defending warrior, then shouted fiercely, urging the defectors ahead incessantly.

"Kill! Survive the ascent, join the legion, become regular soldiers, then get promoted to Third Level Warrior!!"

If one could become a regular soldier, they'd leave the precarious defectors' camp and join the Kingdom's Warriors. Promotion to Third Level Warrior meant land and slaves granted, thus becoming a lord!

"Kill!"

The captured defectors shouted wildly as they climbed the battlements. Frequently, someone was struck by rocks or javelins from the battlements, screaming as they fell to the ground. But Mountain Peak City's walls were relatively low, many defectors fell without dying, though their moaning continued.

"Kill!"

A large crowd of defectors climbed to the battlements, fiercely brandishing short spears, battling against similarly equipped militia. Arrow volleys continuously shot from the army formation below the city, killing both sides simultaneously. The defending warriors rapidly decreased, the militia's morale plummeted rapidly, and within just two quarters of an hour, there were signs of collapse among the enemy on the north wall.

"Good! Good! Refreshing!"

Black Wolf laughed heartily. During these two quarters, he had consecutively killed more than a dozen warriors, and was also struck by several arrows. However, these soft feathered arrows merely lodged into his cloth copper armor, akin to feather decorations. Black Wolf neither dodged nor pulled out the arrows, only fixed his gaze on the battlements. Until the enemy on the battlements began to show signs of defeat, he roared violently, rushing toward the city wall.

"Red-haired personal guards, follow me up, close in for shooting! Shoot feathered arrows right in their faces!"

"Aim at their faces and shoot them dead!"

The Leader led by example, inspiring others the most. The red-haired hunters let out a collective yell, their battle spirit boiling instantly. They quickly ran to the foot of the city walls, pressing against the faces of the defending army at the city top, shooting fiercely with each arrow!

"Whoosh!"

Miwa squinted, aiming for quite some time, then suddenly released a copper arrow. The sharp whistling sound came instantly, and in just one breath, it struck the head of a noble of the Tlaxcala, adorned with a feather crown, standing several steps away on the city wall. The sharp copper arrow pierced through the neck, slashing the windpipe and blood vessels, with the arrowhead protruding from the other side!

"Hooo... ugh..."

The noble on the city wall opened his mouth, but couldn't make a sound, only a torrent of blood gushed out. Then, with a painful shudder, he collapsed abruptly, dying on the spot.

"Ah! The noble descendant of the serpent!..."

In an instant, panic spread among the samurai on the wall. Some rushed towards the body, some retreated backward, while others howled in confusion, not knowing what to do.

"Good! Good! Now is the moment!... It's time to break the city! Once we capture Mountain Peak City, the wealth and women are all ours!"

Seeing the chaos on the wall, Black Wolf was overjoyed. With a keen sense of timing, he threw away his longbow, drew a bronze axe from his waist, and started climbing towards the battle on the city wall.

"Awoo! Charge!"

"Awoo! Charge!"

When the Black Wolf Leader made a promise, it was like a thousand weights, never failing. The red-haired hunters let out exhilarating wolf howls, drawing their bronze axes one after another, and climbed towards the city wall. They were like a torrent of red, merging onto the wall, smashing the last resistance!

In less than a quarter of an hour, the defending army of North City was wailing frantically and crumbled suddenly. Large groups of militia dropped their weapons and knelt to surrender. Even more people panicked, fleeing towards the rear. Witnessing the terrifying scene of the city break, the priests of Tlaxcala on the Temple let out cries of despair. Then, they turned and ran towards the Temple of the God of the Hunt.

"Hula!... Wah!... "

Before long, blazing fires started rising from the Temple. It burned the wooden walls, scorched the ancient murals, consumed the feathered ornaments, melted the gold and silver sculptures... following that was a pungent smell, accompanied by inhuman cries.

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

"Hmm?... These priests, they have strong personalities!"

Black Wolf stood tall on the city wall, wearing blood-stained armor, dropping his blood-dripping battle axe. He glanced at the burning Temple and suddenly burst into loud laughter.

"Haha! I recognize this word! A burning Temple is a pictogram for conquest!"

"Yes! It's the same in the wilderness. A fire burning down an opposing tribe, that's called that conquest!"

Miwa laughed foolishly, completely stained with blood. He looked towards the large numbers of surrendering militia in the city center, then towards the splendid residences, and asked expectantly.

"Leader, are we gonna do something fun next?"

"Hmm? Rushing for what?"

Hearing this, Black Wolf raised an eyebrow, smiled and reached out, giving Miwa's head a hard knock.

"Fun? Following me, Black Wolf, conquering the world, are you afraid there's no fun to be had?"

"Ah? Conquering the world?"

Miwa scratched his head, not quite understanding the meaning of the phrase. But it didn't matter; only the Black Wolf Leader attended the Great Chief's lessons, speaking in complex terms. Warriors just need to run and kill, why learn so much?

"Leader, then what are we going to do?"

"We're going to do important work."

Black Wolf straightened, standing on the high city wall, shouting to his trusted aides on both sides.

"Send out five hundred men to block the south gate! Deploy two hundred men to control the city warehouses! And inform the resisting Tlaxcala warriors and militia, lay down your arms, surrender and you'll live!"

Yes, surrender and live, but only to be enslaved. Black Wolf sneered in his heart. Then he looked towards the legion coming from the west and gave his final order.

"Miwa, you're the fastest! Go, take a few people, and greet His Highness outside Water Valley City. Just say..."

"Leader, say what?"

"Haha! Tell them that I, Black Wolf Torc, took Mountain Peak City in just one day!"

"Got it!"

Miwa stood on the city wall, in front of everyone, took off his copper armor in a few swipes, then threw away his copper helmet. With a leap, he flipped effortlessly down the city wall and immediately sprinted towards the west! In front of him was the fiery sunset, and behind him was the burning Temple!

Chapter 899: Advancing Southern Army

Outside Water Valley City, in the main general's tent, there was a somber and quiet atmosphere. A gentle breeze blew, bringing faint sounds of distant farmers shouting, accompanied by the subtle scent of burning fields. It was the smell of spring cultivation and the hope of an autumn harvest.

Xiulote sat cross-legged on the carpet, looking at his trusted aide Miwa, who was dripping with sweat just a few steps away. He smiled faintly and asked in a low voice.

"Miwa, you just said that Black Wolf has something to tell me?"

"Yes! God of Death, Great Chief."

The red-haired trusted aide Miwa stood in the center of the tent. He looked at the God of Death, the Great Chief above him, earnestly nodding in affirmation.

"I ran all the way without stopping to your tent, precisely to deliver a message from Black Wolf Chieftain!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote showed interest and asked with a smile.

"Oh? What is the message?"

Miwa raised his head and looked at the western sky. Mimicking Black Wolf's posture, he clenched one fist at his chest, while the other hand hung down by his side, suddenly laughing loudly.

"...Haha! I, Black Wolf Torc, conquered Mountain Peak City in just one day!"

"...Cough, cough!"

Witnessing this vivid scene, Xiulote was taken aback, coughing twice before he almost burst into laughter. Then, he smiled wryly, shook his head, and inquired again.

"Conquering Mountain Peak City, how many were the military casualties? How many did we kill, and how many were captured?"

"Uh..."

Miwa was momentarily stunned, not knowing what to say. The army had just captured Mountain Peak City, and he jumped off the city wall, ran a hundred forty miles in two days to reach the camp outside Water Valley City. He left before the battle was over. As for the exact number of casualties and captives, who could know?

"Uh!... God of Death, Great Chief, our casualties aren't significant. Roughly, we lost over a thousand defectors and two hundred warriors from the legion?"

Miwa thought for a moment, roughly offering an estimated number based on tribal warfare experience.

"...I shot dead a chieftain, and the defending army on the city wall fell into disarray. Then Black Wolf Leader led us to capture the city wall. Later, he told me to come back and deliver the message... By the time I left, the enemy tribe had completely scattered, and the warriors' casualties shouldn't increase much further... As for the number captured, it should be thousands upon thousands, many indeed!"

"Hmm... good!"

Xiulote nodded, his expression unchanged. Within three or four days, more accurate reports would naturally arrive from Black Wolf's side. He pondered for a moment, looking at the red-haired warrior before him, and asked carefully.

"Miwa, do you think the Telascalan are easy to fight?"

"Great Chief, if it's out in the wilderness, yes, they are easy to fight!"

Miwa scratched his head, replying frankly.

"We have armor, bows, copper beasts, and wooden beasts. Encountering them in the wilderness, the warriors can unleash several rounds of arrows, then charge forward, and the enemy militia will likely crumble. Their morale is very low, not enduring in battle out in the open... But attacking these tall stone cities results in heavy casualties. On the city walls, tribesmen in armor led by warriors, along with chieftains and priests providing encouragement, even the militia can hold out for a long time. Their numbers are quite large, and they shoot arrows and throw stones, causing casualties to our warriors..."

"...When attacking Water Valley City previously, many warriors from the tribes died. Both sides' warriors were entangled together, burning away like firewood, crackling until they disappeared!..."

"Hmm, you are right."

Xiulote calmly nodded. In battles, attacking cities entails the greatest loss. The casualties from sieges are truly devastating. He thought briefly, looking at Miwa's honest face, and asked in a serious tone.

"With so many warriors lost, are there any voices of discontent within the legion? What is the warriors' morale like?"

"Uh... discontent? Morale?"

Miwa raised his head, cautiously looking at the God of Death, Great Chief, stammering.

"Uh...well... no discontent per se... just some resentment. As long as the legion captures a stone city, kills those chieftains, seizes large amounts of wealth, and then... has some merriment, the warriors will charge again!"

"Hmm..."

Xiulote nodded slowly without speaking. He had a general sense that the legion's morale could still be maintained.

In this era, after assaulting fortified cities and incurring heavy casualties, the warriors must vent their frustrations. The more fiercely the enemy resists, the harsher the subsequent revenge. As for religious faith, it merely allows warriors to endure higher losses, not letting them show mercy.

"Alright, Miwa, you may leave now! Eat some meat, drink some wine. After today, convey my order to Black Wolf, instructing him to transport the captives soon and move everything from the Mountain Peak City area!"

"Alright! As you command, Great Chief!"

Miwa nodded firmly and cheerfully left through the tent's entrance.

Xiulote glanced at the back of the red-haired warrior and smiled, talking to himself.

"Hmm, simple-minded, accustomed to combat, along with familiarity in archery... Wilderness Dog Descendants really are excellent sources of troops! I'll have to send more people to recruit tribes from the wilderness to supplement the legion's losses!"

The young King stood up, gazed in the direction of Mountain Peak City in the East for a while. Then he turned North, and gazed at the mountains and valleys at the horizon's end, contemplation rising in his mind.

Four days later, the second batch of messengers arrived from Mountain Peak City. Black Wolf plundered for two days and then regathered the legion. As Miwa said, in this battle, the legion lost fifteen hundred defectors, three hundred regular soldiers, killed over three thousand defending warriors and militia, and captured more than four thousand able-bodied men.

Ten days later, the second batch of messengers came to announce their victory and brought the first batch of returned captives. After resting for a day, Black Wolf disbanded the legion, dividing it into familiar two-hundred-man squads among the Canine Descendants.

Scores of squads plundered within a hundred-mile radius, capturing Telascallan prisoners! In merely five to six days, they captured over fifteen thousand strong men and women. Combined, all the captives exceed twenty thousand and are being transported back continuously!

Xiulote held fort in Water Valley City, receiving war captives from various legions and transferring them via water routes to the South. Three City-State armies were sent out to capture prisoners throughout the Southern two territories, now having captured over ten thousand. The Yu Yan army even made several raids on the suburbs of the Holy City Cholula, capturing valuable able-bodied people there.

By mid-May, the Southern army had apprehended over eighty thousand Telascallan prisoners! And transferred populations to the Kingdom's heartland, reaching up to twenty thousand!

Under Water Valley City, large patches of corn were already planted, with new fields still being cultivated. Anxious Telascallan prisoners under the supervision of Mexica Warriors continued planting beans.

Envoys from Cholula came wave after wave, yet the King was as steady as a mountain, refusing to meet. Until late May, a few scouts hurriedly arrived from the East, bringing urgent intelligence.

"The raiding Guajili squad encountered Mistek scouts fifty miles south of Mountain Peak City, clashing fiercely! And eighty miles south of Mountain Peak City, Misteks suddenly reinforced Flower Grove Fort with thousands of troops!"

Upon hearing this news, Xiulote was greatly shaken. He immediately unfolded maps, looking toward the South of Mountain Peak City.

The South consisted of undulating mountain ranges, connected by mountain passes. Eighty miles south of the mountains lay a Mistek military fort, Xochitlán. The name "xochitl" meaning "flower," "tlan" many, together forming "Land of Many Flowers," the Flower Grove Fort. This military fort, precisely located south of Mountain Peak City, posed a renewed threat to the Southern army legion!

"Mistek people..."

Xiulote furrowed his brows, with murderous intent slowly accumulating. Drawing a line from Flower Grove Fort southwest, there were still Small Willow Fort and Marsh Fort... All three Mistek military forts had reinforced with thousands, threatening the southern flank of the Southern army legion, and continuously holding back the army's strength, indeed a thorn in the side!

The young King closed his eyes, pondering quietly for a long time. After a while, he calmly spoke to the Head Warrior.

"Bertade, invite the envoys from Cholula, Elder Priest Wezil!"

Upon speaking this, a confident smile appeared on the King's face. He looked north once more, offering a faint smile.

"It's time to have a proper discussion with Cholula's envoys!"

"As you wish, Your Highness!"

Bertade bowed respectfully. However, before leaving, he rarely offered an additional comment.

"Your Highness."

"Hmm?"

"The priests from Cholula are all cunning old foxes... Do not trust them lightly."

"Cunning old foxes..."

Xiulote pursed his lips, pondered for a while, then nodded solemnly.

"Good!"

Chapter 900: Cold Divine Mountain, Dark Red Dead Blood

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The Smoke Peak Divine Mountain towers into the clouds. Its glaciers remain unchanged for millennia, and its cold pines form forests over centuries. Further down, there are steep cliffs, massive rocks, and pungent sulfur mines hiding within, connected to bottomless abysses.

Xiulote holds the Grim Reaper's Skull Divine Staff, sitting on a piece of volcanic rock. He gazes into the vast sky and overlooks the majestic mountains and rivers, his expression as calm and untroubled as the divine mountain.

This is 1,500 meters above Water Valley City, at an altitude of 3,500 meters. The mysterious ancient Temple of Death stands behind the king. In front of the king lies a vast basin at a glance, undulating mountains in the distance, and nearly a hundred miles away, the distant and visible Cholula Holy City.

Elder Priest Wezil bows his head, sitting by the king's side. He cautiously examines the ancient temple, carefully conjecturing the reason behind the Mexica's highness choosing to meet here.

"Elder Wezil, this is the Pocatepetl Divine Mountain, and not far away is the ancient Temple of Death."

After a long time, Xiulote speaks lightly, a smile on his face.

"The ancient volcanic God of Death watches us here. It was here that I obtained the Divine Staff bestowed by the God of Death. I prayed before the statue of the God of Death, listening to the enlightenment of the ancient god... He granted me the authority over the Tlaxcalans and entrusted the Cholula Holy City to me to handle!"

"...Praise the God of Death..."

After a moment of silence, Elder Priest Wezil respectfully responds. He is Cholula's hereditary High Priest and does not truly believe in so-called divine revelation or granted authority. However, in such a divine place, he has to tread carefully to avoid angering the unknown and fearsome... Elder Wezil contemplates for a moment, speaking cautiously again, trying to steer the conversation.

"Your Highness, the authority over the Tlaxcalans is not so easily grasped!"

"Oh?"

Xiulote laughs and asks in a deep voice.

"I have an invincible army, the Divine Staff of the exalted God of Death, and I have also gained the Tlaxcalans' recognition... How can I not grasp the authority?"

"Your Highness, one's eyes can be deceived by appearances, unable to see the truth behind."

Elder Priest Wezil shakes his head. He stretches out his hand, pointing to the pine forest before them, calmly responding.

"Just like this forest! When we look at it, it's a lush and verdant scene, yet within the forest, there are countless pits and cracks... How could the Tlaxcalans beneath the divine mountain possibly recognize enemies who ruin their homes and destroy their families?"

"Hmm?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote raises an eyebrow, his voice turning cold.

"Tens of thousands of Tlaxcalans are working on my spring farming, with almost no one fleeing. Isn't that a kind of recognition?"

"Your Highness, this is not recognition. The Tlaxcalans have never recognized you."

Elder Priest Wezil looks into the king's eyes, denying again.

"The Mexica legion is wantonly capturing captives, scattered across the southern lands, generally resulting in slaughter. The captives have nowhere to escape, they fear death, and without food, they have no choice but to bow their heads to farm... In reality, it's just obedience out of fear, seeing a sliver of illusory light in the desperate darkness, fruitlessly clenched in hand!"

"...Darkness and light..."

Hearing this, Xiulote remains silent. After a moment, he calmly responds.

"No, the light they see is real. What they are doing is not fruitless either."

"Hmm?"

Hearing this, Elder Priest Wezil is slightly startled. He tentatively asks.

"Your Highness, how do you plan to deal with these captives?... Sacrifice? Or enslavement?"

"Neither sacrifice nor enslavement. At least, not for the vast majority."

Xiulote straightens up, calmly informing.

"I want to make them citizens of the Kingdom of the Lake!"

"Ah? This... this is not easy."

Elder Priest Wezil shows surprise. He naturally knows what financial and human resources, along with overcoming human hearts and conflicts, are needed behind this statement.

"The Kingdom of the Lake has Mexica, Prepetcha, Otomi, and Tekos... I treat them all equally, ensuring their sustenance and providing paths for advancement."

Xiulote responds with a smile, filled with strong confidence.

"Now, I have enough patience and means to also transform the Tlaxcalans into my citizens!"

"This..."

Elder Priest Wezil lowers his eyes, contemplating for a while before expressing heartfelt admiration.

"Your Highness, you possess the heart of a king! Just like the creator of the legend, the Toltec Empire, who embraced the whole world!"

"A king's heart?"

Xiulote reflects for a moment, developing a favorable impression towards Wezil. He smiles and says.

"No, I just know the vastness of the world."

"Yes, the world is vast; even with the great power of the Teotihuacan Empire, it cannot be completely conquered."

Elder Priest Wezil responds cautiously, with implications.

"Your Highness, the Teotihuacan Empire colluded with evil within the volcano, mastering immense power! They conquered over half the world, stretching two thousand miles north and south, and over three thousand miles east and west! Yet, what was their end? Even with Teotihuacan's might and

prosperity, offending the All Gods resulted in rapid demise... How does today's Mexica compare to the former Teotihuacan?"

"Haha!"

Hearing this, Xiulote laughs heartily. Comparing the past to the present is no more than common sophistry, its use dependent on intent, full of complexities... The young king smiles, shaking his head, his words brimming with confidence.