

Civilization 931

Chapter 931: The King's Scheme, The Victory Announced in Advance

"Ah! Within twenty days, capture Tree Snake City?!"

"Exactly! No matter the cost, I must capture Tree Snake City before the peak of the rainy season!"

Inside the grand tent, only the two remained. Aweit, without any concealment, coldly declared. Gillim's face changed dramatically, expressing concern and exclamation.

To capture such a fortified Tree Snake City in such a short time would inevitably require a disregard for life, sacrificing thousands of alliance warriors!

It's worth considering that merely assaulting Feathered Serpent City took a full month, with the loss of four hundred royal warriors, over three thousand city-state warriors, and eight thousand militia. Tree Snake City is even more crucial, with higher walls and more defenders. The Tlaxcala warriors in the city outnumber those in Feathered Serpent City by two to three thousand, estimated at around six thousand.

Unlike the emerging Mexica Alliance, the Tlaxcala people's hierarchy is more rigid. These stubborn Serpent Descendant warriors have more or less noble bloodlines and are unlikely to surrender to the alliance. They will surely drive the city's militia to resist to the end.

Thinking of this, Gillim solemnly saluted and sincerely advised.

"Your Majesty, ordering the conquest of the city in twenty days, isn't it too hasty?... If the legion suffers too many casualties, they might become discontent or even resentful..."

"Gillim, this is my decision!"

Aweit shook his head, his expression stern, making decisions with the authority of heaven and earth.

"The current situation differs from before! Elders and the High Priest have gone to the Divine Kingdom... Without the oppression from the Sun and Morning Star, instability and even rebellious thoughts will arise among the alliance states. The tribes across the realm will also react, especially the Totonac not far from the East, the southern Mistec and Vastec tribes, and even the Vastec people who just paid tribute and had their leaders detained..."

"All military forces have been mobilized to participate in the eastern expedition, leaving the alliance heartland extremely empty. Even the Lake Capital City has only four thousand royal warriors, two thousand temple guards who won't easily be deployed, and one thousand elder guards. The nobility harbors hidden discontent, and foreign vassals show hints of rebellion. Should any change occur inside and out, the Lake Capital City would be powerless to suppress it!... Therefore, I cannot besiege the strong city for months, waiting for the rainy season to end, to reliably capture it."

Upon hearing this, Gillim pressed his lips tightly, his expression serious. He bowed deeply, solemnly and softly saying.

"Your Majesty, the Texcoco Lake District has been largely cleared and should not rebel. Texcoco and Tlacopan have both been severely dealt with by the Elders and the High Priest. Either the great nobility died or were reassigned, while the survivors have just been exiled..."

"What of the other Seven States in the south and north? And the newly conquered Otomi and Prepetcha people?"

Hearing this, Gillim bowed his head silently, unable to speak.

As Chief Intelligence Officer, he knew clearly how much power of the great nobility the alliance's centralization reform had stripped away in recent years, and how many seeds of discontent it had planted. Simply engaging in the alliance's interference with noble succession and sending priests to tax nobility fiefs had sparked over a dozen noble rebellions and assassination attempts.

In the seven years since the king's accession, more alliance nobles had died at the hands of the elders, the High Priest, and himself than the total casualties of the alliance wars in the previous fifty-two years!

The royal family has been pushing centralization so insistently, enforcing martial prowess, yet the whole alliance hasn't experienced large-scale rebellion, relying on the long-term suppression from the elders'

divine-like prestige, the High Priest's ruthless and decisive cleaning, and the military victories from the alliance's foreign expeditions. The cooperation between royal authority and divine authority has been extremely tacit, jointly suppressing the local nobility.

Now, with the elders and the High Priest departed, changes are highly likely among the various royal factions within the alliance, and the High Priesthood would also likely undergo internal splits, mutually hindering the centralization reform, presenting notably different circumstances.

After a while, Gillim sighed lightly and asked in a deep voice.

"Your Majesty, what is your plan?"

"At any cost, capture Tree Snake City and capture the Divine Descendants within the city! Then, I will declare victory in the Eastern expedition, lead three royal legions back to the Lake Capital City, and hold an unprecedented grand festival to quell the alliance states and tribes across the world! As for the remaining Cloud Snake and White Snake cities..."

Saying this, Aweit pondered for a long time. He weighed the situation of each contingent in the eastern expedition before finally making a decision.

"For now, Casal will lead four city-state armies to conduct the initial siege. During the peak of the rainy season, when an assault is impossible, neither the Mexica legion nor the Tlaxcala defending army can do much, the scale of combat will be small..."

"As for the siege after the rainy season, Eagle Commander Stanley has two legions under his command, and there are thousands of Iskali and Tepopolu forces. Once they capture the Oak Tree City of the western Weisoqinke state, they can spare ten thousand men to besiege. And Xiulote's Southern Army must draw twenty thousand northwards to continue the siege of the two snake cities!"

"Royal main force returns, vassals surround the city..."

Hearing the words, Gillim's emotions flickered, pondering thoughtfully. He respectfully saluted and nodded in agreement.

"Your Majesty is quite right! The royal main force returning to the Capital City can stabilize the alliance situation, like a withdrawn fist ready to strike out and intimidate all states internally and externally! Meanwhile, the supply consumption on the eastern expedition front will also be greatly reduced... As for the precarious Cloud Serpent Mountain City and White Snake Hill City, they can be slowly besieged, no need to rush, leaving it to the war-experienced His Highness Xiulote..."

"Hmm! I'm reassured with Xiulote commanding. After capturing Tree Snake City, I'll send an envoy to clearly explain the subsequent arrangements to him. And let him conclude the Eastern expedition!"

Chapter 932: The King's Scheme, the Preemptively Announced Victory_2

Aweit smiled, nodding slightly. Then, he pondered over the arrangements for the Grand Festival in the Capital City. The expansion of the Great Temple was complete, the High Priest had been murdered, the elder departed to the Divine Kingdom, the eastern expedition of the Divine War was victorious, and prayers for a bountiful autumn harvest were in place. All these five major events were to be combined into an unprecedented Grand Festival! Such a Grand Festival was destined to proclaim the Chief Divine and ancestors, suppress internal and external states, and consolidate the hearts of the Alliance people as a top priority!

"How many divine descendant captives from the Tlaxcala do the Northern Route Army have now?"

"Your Majesty, the Northern Route Army, after capturing Hot Spring City and Feathered Serpent City, took about a thousand divine descendants and nobility prisoners. Various legion warriors dispersed and raided, capturing over a thousand more. Altogether, including the elderly and young, there are more than two thousand five hundred!"

"More than two thousand five hundred noble bloodlines... still quite short of the six thousand mark..."

Aweit frowned, thinking for a while, and then spoke in a deep voice.

"Let the Southern Army send two thousand captured divine descendants and nobility to the Lake Capital City! Once we have breached Tree Snake City, conduct a massive search in the city; we must gather enough for the auspicious number of six thousand! And after collecting the noble prisoners, I shall return to the Lake Capital City to preside and then announce to the entire world the Grand Festival celebrating the victory of the eastern expedition!"

"Yes, as you command!"

Gillim bowed low in deep salute. Then, with a slight movement of expression, he asked for further instructions.

"Your Majesty, with three-quarters of the four Tlaxcala states conquered, what should be done with the land and population after the Grand Festival?"

"Hmm, how to dispose of the four states of Tlaxcala..."

Aweit contemplated for a long time. The north and south expeditions were extremely bloody, and the four states of Tlaxcala were already in ruins. For the Alliance to truly rule here, Mexica immigrants would need to be relocated to occupy important cities and fortresses, assimilating the remnants of the Tlaxcala tribes. And according to the Alliance's traditional practice, new Mexica city-states should be established by granting fiefs to princes and relocating the nobility.

"Should the territories be distributed as per tradition or directly incorporated into the central domains? If incorporated into the central domains, the royal central authority would have to invest manpower and resources for garrisoning legion warriors, with potential dissatisfaction and complaints from the great nobility of each state..."

Thinking of this, Aweit felt a bit hesitant. Unlike the Kingdom of the Lake, which is a blank slate, the Alliance is deeply intertwined internally. Even someone as prestigious as him cannot arbitrarily reduce fiefs like Xiulote, expanding direct control and continuously strengthening central power. Weighing the pros and cons, and evaluating the situation of the Alliance, he finally sighed and said.

"According to the previous plan, most of the four states will be granted as fiefs, and the Alliance will only control important cities and checkpoints! Reassign parts of the seven northern and southern states' nobility, granting them more than double the fertile lands of the four states, then incorporate their original lands into the royal domain!"

"As you command!"

Gillim nodded respectfully, bowing deeply. After a little hesitation, he raised his head to suggest.

"Your Majesty, the four Tlaxcala states cover vast areas with fertile lands. Even with the bloody eastern campaign wiping out half of the Tlaxcalan tribes, there are still five or six hundred thousand people left! Though historically at odds with our Mexica, they share the same language and similar culture, making assimilation within a generation feasible. The commoners, known as *moth* people for hundreds of years, have been accustomed to the rule of the divine descendant nobility..."

At this point, Gillim paused. In this era, the Sun God, God of Death, Cloud Serpent Divine, Feathered Serpent Divine... each carries distinct symbols, with a tangible divinity in the hearts of the people. Recently, he heard His Highness Xiulote proclaimed the position of God of Death to win the hearts of the Tlaxcala captives, and thus devised a similar plan.

"Your Majesty, after removing the Cloud Serpent Divine descendants among the Tlaxcala tribes, if a royal scion were to preside, inheriting the Cloud Serpent Divine's position, they could quickly win the hearts of all the tribes, making them serve the Alliance!"

"Hmm? A royal scion, inheriting the Cloud Serpent Divine's position, to win over the Tlaxcalan tribes?"

Hearing this, Aweit was slightly stunned, hesitantly asking.

"Do you mean to assign my nephew, Montezuma Xocoyotzin, here as a prince, proclaiming the position of the Cloud Serpent Divine, to govern the Tlaxcalans?"

"...Majesty, that is not what I meant."

Gillim bit his teeth and spoke openly.

"His Highness Prince Chimalpahin is valiant and wise beyond his years! In my opinion, His Highness could be appointed as a prince and succeed the position of the Cloud Serpent Divine!"

"Ah? Little Chimalpahin, appointed as prince?"

Upon hearing this, Aweit was surprised. He examined the Chief Intelligence Officer, his expression slightly cold.

"Gillim, he is only nine years old this year! How could he leave the capital city to be appointed to the Tlaxcala territories?"

"Your Majesty! Although the young prince is still very young, he is indeed incredibly intelligent and decisive, far surpassing other noble offspring!"

Gillim prostrated himself, forehead touching the ground, earnestly advising.

"You can continue to keep the young prince by your side, carefully teaching and nurturing him. But by allowing him to inherit the Cloud Serpent Divine position, appointing him prince, on one hand, he could nominally command the reassigned Alliance nobility and control the four states' territories. On the other hand, it would greatly assist in the assimilation of the Tlaxcala people, consolidating the hearts of the various tribes!"

"...And as the young prince grows older, he can then set out eastward to manage the Four Snake Cities. The Four Snake Cities are not far from the Lake Capital City; if taking a shortcut through the mountains, it's less than three hundred miles, making it convenient to meet..."

"...Moreover, with the future of the Alliance handed over to His Highness Xiulote and Princess Alisa, the young prince will eventually need a place to establish himself! Your Majesty!..."

"A place to establish himself? My son, Little Chimalpahin..."

Upon hearing this, Aweit lowered his eyes, a myriad of emotions surging in his chest, yet he made no sound. The Royal Tent was silent for a moment, with only Gillim's earnest advice echoing softly inside.

"Alisa, together with Xiulote, will inherit the Alliance I leave behind. And young Chimalpahin's appointment..."

Aweit closed his eyes in deep thought, remaining silent, as reason and emotion clashed in his mind. His first daughter Alisa has always been his favorite; now she is married, she and his son-in-law Xiulote will inherit the great power of the Alliance. Yet by his side remains only the second son from his late wife; without any arrangements, there would eventually be a trace of guilt...

"Hmm... Accelerate the assimilation of the eastern Four States..."

After a while, Aweit let out a long breath, finding a reason to convince himself. He suppressed his deep emotions, nodding slowly.

"Appoint young Chimalpahin, succeed the position of the Cloud Serpent Divine... It is acceptable!"

Gillim, kneeling on the ground, was overjoyed. He performed a respectful salute, with a hint of delight in his voice.

"Praise the King, praise the Chief Divine! Under the protection of the Chief Divine, blessed by the ancestors, the eastern expedition will surely triumph!... Your Majesty, you have vanquished both the Tarasco and the Tlaxcala two parties, dividing the entire world, becoming an unprecedented magnificent monarch! In decades, you will surely be revered as the most supreme and greatest immortal Great Tlatoani in the history of the Alliance!"

"Haha!"

Upon hearing the words of the Female Snake, Aweit laughed aloud. Then, he shook his head arrogantly, correcting.

"No, Gillim, you got it wrong!... With the elder and High Priest's subsequent fall, I am now the most supreme, the greatest Great Tlatoani within the Mexica Alliance!"

"Yes, congratulations to Your Majesty! You are the supreme one, shining brightly in all directions like the Sun!"

Gillim saluted in praise, while Aweit laughed heartily. The traces of tears on his face had dried, leaving only vigorous ambition and a thirst for conquest. Never before had so much power been concentrated in one person's hands across the entire world, yet he desired even more!

"Perhaps, I should adopt a new title."

Aweit thought to himself mysteriously. Then, he grasped the Divine Staff, bellowing in a powerful voice.

"Someone, announce to the entire army, mourn for the elder and High Priest for one day! After one day, the whole army marches south, attacking Tree Snake City, avenging the High Priest, and offering sacrifices for the elder!"

"As you command, O supreme Sun!"

Soon, the news of mourning spread, and the warriors' cries and howls echoed throughout the entire military camp. Those boiling shouts were like the howling of a pack of wolves, unending throughout the night, carrying a fierce sense of killing intent.

The old sun slowly set, and the new sun would rise the next day. And after the sun rose, there would be a bloody and cruel siege, akin to a sacrificial slaughter!

Chapter 933: A Fleeting Opportunity for Battle, the Telascallans' Night Raid!

The clouds cleared, the night fell deep. Moonlight poured down like water, spreading its cold glow, illuminating the sprawling Mexica camp outside Snake City, resembling a giant serpent poised to devour its prey. The large and small flags of Mexica nobility fluttered high, like the wings of a serpent, obscured in the shadows. And the bonfires lit across the camp were like the serpent's flashing scales, pulsating with a captivating murderous intent.

"Aowoo! Roar!..."

As the night deepened, a frenzy of hissing and howling suddenly erupted from the Mexica camp. This was quickly followed by the desperate cries of the City-State Warriors.

"Ah! Ah! The immortal sun has set!..."

"Sacrifice for the elders, revenge for the High Priest!..."

"Kill! Kill! Conquer Snake City, slaughter the Tlaxcallans!..."

"Aowoo! Roar!..."

The terrible cries shook the fields, like rolling thunder, reaching far into the distance. Similar cries seemed to also echo in the direction of Northeast White Snake City. Night's thunder carried the elegy, flowing in the mighty long wind, seeping into the hearts of tens of thousands!

"Thump thump boom..."

Dozens of elite Tlaxcallan Warriors, donning leather armor with Snake patterns, quickly ascended the city walls, spreading to guard both directions. Soon after, a respected middle-aged Divine Descendant, wearing a long feather crown, with an obsidian necklace around his neck, draped in a tree-patterned cloak, and holding a jade Divine Staff, hurriedly arrived. He climbed to the high part of the city head, with a worried expression.

"What is happening?! Why are the Mexica suddenly raising a clamor?"

The middle-aged Divine Descendant stood on the city head, looking out towards the eastern Mexica camp, only hearing the mad cries.

The Mexica warriors in the camp seemed to be engulfed in immense grief. That sound was like injured wolves, relentlessly howling to the moon. And as he looked at the main flag of the Mexica camp under the faint moonlight, it revealed the symbol of a tree, precisely the Tzompantli's legion of Tepanecapan.

"Who is the noble stationed at the city head tonight? Have him come quickly and report!"

Upon hearing this, the Snake City trusted aides quickly hurried away. In less than a quarter, a hereditary noble with a thick brow and strapped with a greatbow appeared before the middle-aged Divine Descendant, respectfully kneeling.

"Respected Snake Divine Descendant, City Lord Okote! Cloud Serpent Hunter Telavito, pays his respects!"

Upon hearing the title "Cloud Serpent Hunter," City Lord Okote's expression adjusted. The Cloud Serpent was the embodiment of the God of the Hunt, and hunters named after the Cloud Serpent were the top-tier archery masters! He slightly bowed his head, nodding to Telavito. Then, the esteemed Snake Divine Descendant asked solemnly, with urgency in his voice.

"Telavito, what happened in the Mexica camp? Why are they shouting so fiercely, even frantically?"

"City Lord, I have listened for a long time on the city head and observed the actions of the Mexica warriors..."

Cloud Serpent Hunter Telavito pondered for a moment, then reported frankly.

"They are shouting about the sun's fall, sacrifice and revenge... It seems a highly noble Descendant of the Sun God has gone to the Divine Kingdom!"

"Ah?! The Descendant of the Sun God, fallen?"

Upon hearing this, Okote's expression shifted, gasping aloud. A hint of hope appeared on his face.

"Could it be that King Aweit has died? If so, the Mexica have lost their leader, they would withdraw from below the city!"

"...City Lord, it probably isn't."

Telavito thought for a bit and shook his head.

"Outside the east city is the City-State Army of the Mexica. If the king who ascended the throne just a few years ago went to the Divine Kingdom, they wouldn't be so sad!..."

"Uh..."

Okote was momentarily speechless; this was indeed the truth. The City-State Armies across regions are private troops of the various nobility, loyal directly to the Great Nobility within the City-State, rather than the topmost alliance leader. In the entire land, except for the former Tarasco Kingdom, this situation is generally true.

Since King Aweit of the Mexica ascended the throne, he has enforced centralization, suppressing local City-States. Though he is renowned and powerful, his aggressive approach stirred dissatisfaction among the Great Nobility who found their interests hurt. If he indeed died on the eastern campaign...the nobles and warriors of the city-state armies would surely celebrate in secret, never mourn so bitterly.

"Hmm...aside from the Mexica's Great Tratuani, who else can be called the sun? Even the Lord of Death God Temple on the south cannot bear this title now..."

"City Lord, I vaguely heard the term 'We-we' repeatedly mentioned..."

"We-we? Respected elder?"

Upon hearing this, Snake City Lord Okote paused, thinking for a moment, his face revealing a look of disbelief.

"Ah! Could it be? Could it be! ...Him?"

"Very likely!"

Telavito's expression turned serious, nodding earnestly.

"Only He who personally established the Mexica Alliance could inspire such heartfelt awe and reverence among the Mexica nobles and warriors of all states!"

"Ah this!..."

City Lord Okote of Tree Snake City changed his expression, his thoughts racing, almost forgetting. For more than forty years, he had been listening to that name, growing from a child to middle age. That name had existed for so long, it almost became an immortal mark, a divine being of the present world. But once such a sun falls...

"Kill! Kill! Capture Tree Snake City, for the immortal sun, sacrifice them!..."

The cries of the Mexica warriors rose again from the army camp, like thunder. This time, their shouts were so clear, almost directly entering the ears of all the people on the city wall!

"Ah!"

City Lord Okote trembled all over. His face showed a trace of fear as he whispered to himself.

"These...bloodthirsty, frantic Mexica people!... If this continues, I fear it will be a fearless assault on the city, sacrificing the divine descendants..."

"City Lord! The next attack from the Mexica legion will surely be more ferocious than ever! If we only hold on defensively, passively getting attacked, no matter how strong the city is, it will be impossible to hold!"

Telavito gritted his teeth, made up his mind, and spoke up. He gripped the short dagger at his waist, showing a fierce determination in his eyes.

"Revered descendant of the Tree Snake God, opportunities in battle appear in a flash. Taking advantage of the Mexica's grief tonight, we must take the initiative to attack! Please give me five hundred elite warriors capable of fighting at night, to follow me out and launch a night raid on the shaken Mexica!"

"Hmm?! You want to launch a night raid on the enemy camp?"

Upon hearing this, City Lord Okote's expression changed. He gripped his divine staff and after careful consideration, asked in a low voice.

"Telavito, how confident are you?"

"City Lord, launching a night raid from the city, attacking the many with the few, is like a solitary cougar attacking a fierce wolf pack, it is a path of no return!"

Telavito stood up, drew the obsidian dagger from his waist, and pointed toward the military camp outside the city.

"The strategy of the Mexica City-State Army typically involves militia surrounding on the outside, with warriors holding firm inside. The warriors are the core of the city-state army, while the militia are merely endless expendables. No matter how the militia are brutally consumed, the warriors rely on a sturdy camp, unmoving like a mountain, ready to strike out at any time. They will use the lives of the militia to deplete the enemy's strength, disrupt their formations, and seize an opportunity to attack the enemy warriors!..."

Upon hearing this, Okote nodded slightly. The Tlaxcallans and the Mexica have been at war for decades, familiar with such tactics, but the Mexica warriors were indeed ruthless and relentless, difficult to truly defeat.

"But tonight is different! The Mexica warriors are grieving and frenzied, teetering on the edge of chaos. Once they grow weary and rest, I will lead the elites to strike! Even if it costs us dearly, we are bound to achieve results and truly harm the enemy warriors!"

As Telavito said this, a brilliant light flashed in his eyes. He knelt down once more to salute, requesting permission from the noble descendant of the Tree Snake God.

"Revered descendant of the divine, please give me five hundred warriors! If I cannot break the enemy's army, I would rather die in battle outside the city!"

Okote gazed at the brave Cloud Serpent hunter, looking into his bright and determined eyes. After a while, he nodded heavily.

"Good!... Telavito, my warrior, I will give you five hundred of Tree Snake's trusted aides! May the supreme Cloud Serpent protect you!... I have only one request, that you return alive!"

"May the supreme Cloud Serpent protect us!"

Hearing this, Telavito's spirits lifted, his heart surging with heroic spirit. He lowered himself to the ground, knocking thrice, solemnly pledging.

"Revered descendant of the divine! I shall fight to the death outside the city, break through the Mexica warriors, and bring you a glorious victory!"

City Lord Okote nodded silently, reaching out to grip Telavito's hair. Then, he removed his Tree Snake cloak, draping it over Telavito himself. The valiant Cloud Serpent hunter looked moved, bowing to the ground to pay respects once more. Meanwhile, two trusted aides took the jade seal, discreetly heading into the city to gather troops.

A few quarters of an hour later, five hundred elite Tree Snake warriors, clad in leather armor with tree patterns, wielding obsidian war clubs, gathered beneath the city walls. Telavito, draped in the noble tree-patterned cloak, silently walked past each Tree Snake warrior, holding the war club high.

"Cloud Serpent protect us! For the sacred bloodline, we fight to the death!"

"Cloud Serpent protect us! Fight to the death!"

The Tree Snake warriors responded in low voices, their eyes burning with fighting spirit. They were the trusted aides of Okote, nurtured for generations, the most loyal and battle-hardened elite in the city. Only true elites could undertake the arduous task of a night raid.

Having passed through, witnessing these elite Tree Snake warriors, Telavito felt some confidence rising in his heart. He then came to the city gate, sat down cross-legged, and calmly closed his eyes, waiting quietly below the city.

The five hundred Tree Snake warriors looked toward the city head, where the noble descendant Okote stood motionless, quietly observing the outside of the city, like a statue. From outside the city, the faint sounds of shouting still resembled the mournful howls of wolves. The Tree Snake warriors also sat down one after another, conserving energy, accumulating the strength needed for deadly combat.

"Awooo! Roar! ... Roar..."

Until dawn was about to break and the deepest darkness approached, the Mexica camp gradually fell silent. The grieving city-state warriors felt fatigue, slowly going to rest. Only a few patrol teams still wandered outside the city.

"It's almost time; it's now!"

In the silent wind, Telavito suddenly opened his eyes. Then he suddenly stood up, waved his war club, and commanded the guards at the city gate.

"Open the city gate! Warriors of the God of the Hunt, go to battle with me! Cloud Serpent protect the warriors!"

"Cloud Serpent protect us!"

In just a dozen breaths, under the busy work of the guards on the city wall, the tightly closed city gate of Tree Snake City suddenly creaked open, revealing a dark hole of a city gate! And behind the gate, countless warriors' figures suddenly emerged.

Telavito, cloaked in the cape, armed with a greatbow, and holding a war club, was the first to leap out of the city gate. Five hundred Tree Snake warriors, with their war clubs lowered, followed closely behind. They did not light any torches or make any sounds, like silent tree snakes, opening their venomous mouths and pouncing fiercely and sharply toward the Mexica camp a mile outside the city!

Chapter 934: The Fight between Night and Fire

The dawn was approaching, the bright moon sinking into the West Mountain, yet the morning sun hadn't risen. It was the darkest moment of the day. Torches were lit on the walls of Snake City,

campfires rose outside the Mexica encampment, and between these two sources of light were the Tree Snake Samurai dashing through the shadows.

Telavito held a war club and, stepping through the shadows of the night, led five hundred elite warriors on a rapid charge! They had preserved their strength and prepared well, running with such speed. In but a quarter of an hour, the group reached within two hundred paces of the camp.

"滴!...滴!..."

At this distance, the firelight from the Mexica camp illuminated them, and the assault team could no longer hide. The patrolling Mexica Warrior squad was taken aback and immediately blew a warning horn. The piercing horn sound echoed through the night sky, awakening all the sleeping warriors and militia from sweet dreams into a real nightmare.

"Go!"

Telavito pointed his war club, and a squad of twenty people split off to attack the patrolling warriors giving the alarm. Then, the brave Cloud Serpent Hunters pressed on, swiftly arriving at the Mexica legion's encampment.

The outermost part of the camp only had a crude fence and a camp gate where battle flags were hung. Further back were the open-air straw shelters of the City-State militia. Hearing the warning horn, the camp was already clamorous. Under the firelight at the camp gate, the gate-guarding Mexica Warriors gathered their spirits quickly. Their faces were full of tension and fatigue, yet they adeptly set up their spears, almost without thinking.

Telavito glanced at the Mexica Warriors at the gate and chose not to force through. The Mexica had only camped outside Snake City recently, and the outer fence was hastily built by the militia. Though it formed a circle, it was full of flaws. He circled the camp, running tens of meters, and spotted a crude wooden fence. Then, he gave a low shout, instructing his trusted aides.

"Bring the bronze axe, break open the fence!"

Two strong Tree Snake Samurai immediately hefted the great axe, sprinting forward and hacking at the wooden fence vigorously. The rest took out agave ropes, tied them to the pillar's stakes, and pulled with all their might. In just a few breaths, the crude wooden fence was tottering.

"Such sharp and durable great axes! ... In recent years, the Mexica's weapons have become increasingly fine, surpassing ours in many ways! Though the warriors of Cloud Serpent are brave, how much blood must be shed to bridge such a gap?..."

Telavito's expression was complex as he lightly sighed. Then, he pressed his lips tightly, filled with murderous intent, and waited in silence.

The Tlaxcala Valley and the Mexican Valley were actually quite close, only separated by continuous high mountains, dwelling on either side of the Divine Mountain. There were numerous mountain paths, though impassable for large armies, they served for smuggling caravans. These sharp bronze great axes were purchased at high prices by the nobles of Snake City from the smugglers of the Alliance, and they were few in number.

As for why the Alliance's controlled military supplies found their way into the hands of smugglers? ... One can only say that in any era, the business of trafficking military supplies will always exist. Severe punishment and sacrifices to the Chief Divine can minimize such corruption, but cannot completely avoid it.

"咄! 咄!... Bang!"

The harsh sound of the wooden stakes snapping sharply rang out! The crude fence couldn't withstand the chopping and tugging and finally broke open a gap. In the dim night, Telavito looked beyond the fence at the panic-stricken City-State militia and smiled with a wolf-like ferocity.

"Follow me, kill them all! Cloud Serpent protects us!"

"Cloud Serpent protects! Kill!"

Telavito brandished the war club and leaped through the gap, slicing down a youthful militia member in just two strokes. Five hundred Tree Snake Samurai let out chaotic roars and, like a pack of wolves, surged through the gap.

Those who participated in the night raid were all elite warriors of Tlaxcala. Their battle techniques were skillful, cutting horizontally and vertically, slaughtering the recently awakened and fleeing City-State militia like a tiger into a flock of chickens. Before long, someone picked up a burning log from the campfire and set the outer camp ablaze without hesitation!

Soon, large sheets of flames roared up, accompanied by shrill screams. Armored silhouettes danced before the firelight, viciously and brutally slaughtering the militia. This fierce night raid took advantage of precise timing, completely catching the Tzompantli legion off guard!

The vast outer camp was plunged into utter chaos. The dangerous chaos was rippling inward, like a pebble tossed into a pond, splattering into red waves.

"Ah!... Enemies! The Tlaxcala people!"

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack! Run!"

"No escape! Kill for me!... Ugh... ho-ho..."

Telavito panted heavily, lowering his blood-stained war club, from which fresh red dripped. A Chieftain of a Mexica village militia lay at his feet, his neck spurting blood, soaking Telavito's shoes.

Behind him were dozens of fallen corpses and the blazing flames. In front of him, dozens of mostly unclothed City-State Militia scrambled frantically like frightened chickens, even abandoning all their weapons.

"Haha! The Mexica militia on the outskirts, despite numbering in the thousands, are utterly useless!"

Telavito glanced around, his eyes fierce and sharp, with a smirk on his lips. Within no more than a quarter, he had already slain ten men, breaching through the outer camp where the militia gathered,

reaching the warrior camp inside. After the City-State Militia scattered, most fled in all directions, not really impacting the inner warrior camp.

"The true target of this night raid is the thousands of Tzompantli Warriors in the inner layer!"

The Cloud Serpent Hunter stiffened his expression, watched for a moment, then swung his war club, continuing to charge into the inner layer.

The warrior camp in the inner layer was obviously much more secure. Various camps and grass huts were spaced apart, while flags of the City State Nobles fluttered before the tents. Some of the warriors from different families scattered in the night raid, while others gathered closer to their respective nobility, forming Noble Battle Groups of varying numbers.

"Chrrr!..."

Telavito fiercely slashed sideways, tearing apart a noble's cotton armor before him, inflicting a dreadful wound, spraying warm splashes. Underneath the family's traditional Red Tree banner, a middle-aged Great Nobility of Mexica perished in battle! Then, Telavito discarded his worn-edged war club, reached out with both hands to grasp the blood-stained family flag, and snapped it forcefully.

"Crunch!...Bang!"

The Red Tree banner fell into the pool of blood, dyed even redder. A hereditary noble of dozens of warriors was wiped out in the brutal night raid, and more than ten elite Tree Snake warriors were lost. Telavito took off the longbow from his back, with a hand axe and arrows on his waist, resting briefly. He gasped for breath to recover his rapidly depleted stamina while squinting to observe the surrounding battle.

After several quarters of fierce combat, the Mexica people's militia was completely fragmented, yet the warriors gradually recovered from chaos. They organized quickly into small teams nearby, engaging in melee with the attacking Tree Snake warriors. Both sides swung at each other, engaging in close combat where life and death hung by a thread. Occasionally, warriors emitted injured screams or fell silently. Around him, most of the five hundred Tree Snake warriors dispersed, with only over a hundred continuing to follow.

"Between the outskirts and the inner layer of the Mexica camp, there's a separation of several dozen meters. The outer bonfire can't burn into the inside for now..."

Telavito furrowed his brow, pondering quietly. He leveraged the flaming light to gaze at the fiercely battling camp, seeking truly valuable targets.

"Militia are like leaves, impossible to kill them all. Warriors are like branches, breaking them is strenuous... But the truly noble and vital are the core pillars, the trunk that commands the legion, the honorable nobility, the leaders of the Mexica people! He's right there!"

The Cloud Serpent Hunter watched for a moment, finally spotting the tallest banner! Positioned in the center and rear of the camp, the banner was two hundred paces away. Several hundred elite Tzompantli warriors were hurrying from surrounding tents, gathering hastily under the grand flag.

"Cloud Serpent's shelter! Tree Snake Warriors, follow me to charge over, offering the Mexica Leader to the Supreme Divine!"

Telavito let out a low roar, gripping the longbow in one hand and wielding the bronze axe in the other, charging fiercely.

"Cloud Serpent's shelter, offer to the Divine!"

The surrounding Tree Snake warriors, red-eyed, roared, following in Telavito's footsteps, charging towards the tallest Tzompantli flag.

Under the grand flag, bonfires were ablaze, illuminating everyone's features. The elder Tzompantli Legion Commander, Xochitl, appeared grim, like clouds in the rainy season. Dressed in elaborate armor and wearing a light leather cap, he stood before the bonfire, looking distantly at the camp's grim situation.

"Damn King Aweit! Using siege tactics to drain the Tzompantli legion warriors, then forcing me to encircle the camp here, without providing sufficient troops!..."

Facing the unexpected night raid from the Tlaxcalans, Xochitl's rage burned. He felt both the pang from the legion's loss and resentment towards the king. But the most critical task now was to gather the City's warriors, eliminate the chaotic fighting, and form a tight, stable battle formation!

Thinking of this, Xochitl raised the scepter in his hand and shouted sternly:

"Chief Divine bears witness! Brave Tzompantli warriors, do not panic, do not scatter! I stand right here, all rally to my flag! Raise the spear, lift the war club, form the battle formation, slaughter the night-raiding Tlaxcalans..."

"Whoosh!"

The Tzompantli Legion Commander shouted, beard and hair stretched wide. A fierce copper arrow streaked forth like lightning! The lightning sliced through the dull night, shot hastily from dozens of steps away, piercing his chest in an instant!

Chapter 935: Death Under the Dawn

The East was still dark, and the night was deep. Shadows swayed and fled within the Mexica camp, weapons clashing. Occasionally, someone screamed and fell, transforming into silent corpses. Blood sprayed freely, even turning the air sweet and metallic. The flames of the roaring bonfire flickered, illuminating samurai clad in armor; the legendary flags torn, instigating chaotic shouts!

The night raid came suddenly, plunging the entire camp into chaos. The battle conducted in the dark tested not the numbers, but organization and tenacity. The city-state militia were blind at night, fleeing in terror, breaking down in panic. But the Mexica warriors from different families scattered, huddling together, guarding the noble flags of legacy, battling wildly under the moon. The largest and fiercest battle group was located centrally at the back of the camp, the place of the legion's commander.

The tall banner of Tzompantli fluttered fiercely in the darkness. Elite Cloud Serpent warriors and Tzompantli warriors yelled the same language, fighting brutally in close quarters. The warriors' shouts boiled like spring water, and even their bodies splashed crimson red. At this moment of chaos, a piercing lightning bolt suddenly struck, hitting the Tzompantli clan leader who was high above, holding up his scepter and shouting loudly, right through his heart!

"Clang!"

The sharp clash of metal rang out instantaneously, causing everyone to tremble!

Xochitl felt a sharp pain in the heart, his expression suddenly changed. The force behind this arrow was enormous! He staggered back two steps, collapsed onto the ground with a "crash," even the spine hurt terribly.

"Whizz!"

"Ah!"

Yet another arrow flew through the air, brushed past Xochitl's beast helmet, hitting his trusted aide behind him. The elder Legion Commander turned sharply, even dropping the splendid beast helmet, revealing greying hair.

"Family Head!"

"Legion Commander!"

Seeing the commander attacked, the surrounding Tzompantli trusted aides panicked, turning frantically to assist. The Mexica warriors, unaware of the commander's fate, felt the battle group become unstable, showing signs of breaking apart.

"The Mexica Commander is dead! The Mexica Commander is dead!"

The Tlaxcala warriors of the night raid rejoiced immensely, shouting urgently. Although few in number, their morale was extremely high, carried by a determined courage. At this moment, they wielded their war clubs with all their might, desperately thrusting forward, seizing the moment to scatter the hundreds of resilient trusted aides.

"Get back!"

Commander Xochitl sat on the ground, shouting angrily. His hair was in disarray, a copper arrow lodged in his chest, looking especially miserable.

"Family Head!"

Dozens of Tzompantli trusted aides rushed forward anxiously, nearly forming a wall around Xochitl.

"I'm fine! All of you, get back and continue fighting!"

Xochitl reached in, probing under the luxurious war clothes to touch the cold, solid metal beneath the layer of soft cotton armor. He searched around his heart for a while before exhaling with certainty. The copper arrow had penetrated the fabric but was blocked by the bronze armor plate underneath, barely damaging the armor plate without piercing through the flesh.

"Thank the Chief Divine! I've fought all my life, and without this high-priced bronze medium armor, I'd be done for today!"

Xochitl abruptly pulled out the copper arrow from his armor and threw it forcefully to the ground. Then, he donned the beast helmet symbolizing honor, and with the support of the family Head Warrior Texiwhit, stood up strongly, reappearing before the Mexica warriors.

"Thank the Chief Divine! Warriors blessed by the divine, fear no vile arrows!"

Xochitl glared fiercely towards the direction from which the copper arrow had come. Fifty steps away, more than a hundred elite Cloud Serpent warriors, led by a caped Great General wielding a Greatbow, were fiercely attacking this way.

Seeing this, Family Head Warrior Texiwhit immediately raised his Great Shield, carefully protecting the Family Head in the direction of the threat. Meanwhile, Tzompantli Legion Commander, with reddened eyes, raised his scepter and pointed sharply that way, shouting fiercely to the trusted aides.

"Despicable Tlaxcala, daring to ambush the divine descendants! Go, my warriors! Kill! Kill them in offering to the Chief Divine!"

"Kill! Kill them, offer them to the Chief Divine!"

Seeing the commander unscathed, hundreds of Tzompantli trusted aides instantly regained their spirits and ignited the will to fight. They swung their war clubs again, refusing to retreat, fiercely entangled with the charging Cloud Serpent warriors.

Honorable noble Xochitl, being the most revered divine descendant in the Tzompantli City, was also the true leader of the city-state army. He had commanded the legion for twenty years or so, known for his decisive authority and renowned prestige. As long as he stood here, the city-state warriors would not easily collapse.

"Damn it!"

Cloud Serpent Hunter Telavito gritted his teeth, muttering a curse. He had prepared for this chance carefully ensuring the first arrow fired when the opponent was unguarded. To increase accuracy, he aimed at the heart, using copper arrows smuggled from the Alliance. But upon hearing the metallic sound as the copper arrow struck, he immediately realized something was wrong, hastily firing a second compensating arrow, but alas...

"Damn it! He must be wearing that sturdy copper armor!... Really damn it! What has happened to the Mexicas in recent years, there is so much new equipment!"

Telavito bit down hard, breaking his lip, feeling the bloody pain, his chest filled with murderous intent. The Mexica legion was in chaos during the night raid; if the opposing commander could be killed and loudly acclaimed, it could even completely disperse these thousands!

"Warriors of Cloud Serpent, charge with me! Kill the opposing commander!"

Chapter 936: Death Under the Dawn_2

"Kill!"

The Tree Snake Samurai shouted out loudly, charging ferociously. Hundreds of Tzompantli's trusted aides gathered, forming a resilient battle group to block the assault of the Tree Snake Samurai. Meanwhile, the courageous Cloud Serpent Hunter threw away his greatbow, grasped his bronze axe tightly, and charged first at the blocking battle group.

Telavito's steps were exceptionally nimble, like a leaping leopard, swiftly moving to the right rear of a young samurai, where the left-hand shield could not cover. He stretched out his arm, swung precisely, and cut through the opponent's shoulder, breaking their defensive movements. Then, he closed in again, lightly slashing upward against the warrior's counter-strike with the war club.

"Ugh!... Hoh hoh..."

A large spray of blood spurted from the neck of the young samurai, impossible to stop. Telavito stepped back two steps to avoid the splattering blood and without looking again, directly killed other city-state warriors. In just a few breaths, there were two more dying screams.

"Ah!... Ah!..."

"Hmm?!"

Xochitl frowned and, taking advantage of the burning firelight, looked toward the charging Tlaxcala warriors. These hundred or so warriors were evidently the elite from Snake City, their battle techniques exceptionally skilled and their coordination seamless. The cloak-clad great general leading them was particularly fierce, having killed three people consecutively and advanced within forty paces! Ordinary city-state warriors simply could not intervene.

"Texiwhit, you, go stop that great general!"

Xochitl thought for a moment, then looked at the head warrior of the family beside him. In Navajo, Texiwhit means firm and wise turquoise. This is a rare and beautiful name, usually given as a nickname to the most tenacious warriors or the most intelligent priests.

"Yes, Family Head!"

Texiwhit lowered his head, bowing respectfully. He was burly, wearing armor, holding a great shield, like a robust wooden stake.

"The opponent is very fierce, don't engage in a deadly struggle. Use your shield well, just hold him down! There shouldn't be many night-raiding Tlaxcalans, as long as the warriors hold their ground and recover from the chaos... the ones utterly defeated will be them!"

Xochitl carefully exhorted a couple of times, patting the high shoulder of the family head warrior.

"Don't take risks, see me alive!"

"Yes! Family Head, I'll die for you!"

Texiwhit saluted and left with a few trusted aides. With long and heavy strides, he ran swiftly. Moments later, he stood firmly in front of Telavito with his half-human-tall great shield. The fierce advancing Cloud Serpent Hunter immediately felt the pressure like a mountain.

"Damn!"

Cloud Serpent Hunter Telavito swung his bronze axe continuously, all blocked by the opponent's leather-covered wooden shield, making "thud thud" dull sounds. When he tried to bypass the tall Mexica warrior, the opponent displayed not just agility but also extremely threatening blows.

"Damn it! You agile turtle!"

The Cloud Serpent Hunter was forced to stop, entangling with the wooden stake in front of him. He kept shouting provocations at his opponent, hoping to draw out a flaw.

Texiwhit, with his head down, kept silent. He wielded his shield and war club, primarily defending, occasionally countering, stable and as solid as a rock.

"Huff... Huff!"

Cloud Serpent Hunter Telavito charged for a quarter of an hour, all blocked by Texiwhit the Turquoise. The surrounding Tree Snake Samurai charged relentlessly, also held back by the resilient Tzompantli's trusted aides.

Under the dim night fire, both sides hacked close, completely tangled together. In just a short time, dozens of elite warriors fell. Warm blood spread freely at the battle site, soaking the warriors behind and making the ground muddy and sticky.

"Chief Divine protect us!"

"Cloud Serpent protect us!"

The flames flickered, casting a wavering light over the chaotic crowd. The fierce sounds of killing quickly turned into cries of pain from the wounded, then were overwhelmed by new shouts.

Fifteen minutes later, the Tree Snake Samurai still hadn't breached the barrier, only futilely sacrificing their lives, joining the city-state warriors on the journey to the Divine Kingdom. As the battle reached a stalemate, the numerical disadvantage of the Tlaxcalans slowly revealed itself.

The elder Xochitl stood in front of the fire and the great flag, motionless, his expression stern and somewhat somber.

The battlefield before him was like a lake gathering streams of blood, concentrating vitality, devouring the lives of warriors. Small groups of Mexica warriors continuously arrived from the surrounding nobility residences, joining the battle. Sporadic Tree Snake Samurai also ran in from the outer camps, but their numbers were much fewer.

"Ha!"

Seeing more and more legion warriors, Xochitl's lips curled into a ruthless smile. He slightly tilted his head back, glancing at the fully set moon, then at the soon-to-rise sun.

"Huff! The darkest moment is finally about to pass!... Once daylight breaks..."

Xochitl narrowed his eyes coldly, observing the hundred or so Tree Snake Samurai struggling among the three to four hundred Tzompantli's trusted aides, especially that battle-savvy great general. His heart was full of killing intent, and he contemplated the aftermath of this battle.

In this night raid, the Tzompantli legion likely suffered heavy losses, with his power and prestige weakened in tandem. King Aweit, ever aggressive, might seize the chance to punish, further suppressing the city-state army... he must leave enough substantial sacrifices to account for this night raid!

With the sky brightening slightly, the camp started to recover from the chaos. Xochitl watched the battlefield for a moment, feeling the situation was under control. Then, he turned his head, and in a deep voice commanded his family's escorts on either side.

Chapter 937: Death Under the Dawn_3

"Go! Take forty men and encircle from both sides! Don't let that Tlaxcalan Great General escape!"

"At your command, Family Head!"

The trusted aides bowed their heads in unison, respectfully saluting. Soon, the wall of trusted aides surrounding Xochitl thinned out. Two squads of samurai swiftly moved to surround the rear of the Tree Snake samurai.

"Telavito! It's almost time, we should retreat!"

The noble warrior Itz, covered in blood, rushed to the brave Cloud Serpent Hunter, urgently whispering. He was the personal aide to Okote, the City Lord of Tree Snake City, and the Deputy Leader of this night's raid.

"Hah, hah!"

Telavito, his eyes red, ignored him. He fiercely struck, seemingly about to completely shatter Texiwhit's Great Shield.

"Telavito, it's impenetrable!"

Itz swung his war club, covering Telavito's flanks. While blocking the attacks of the Tzompantli's trusted aides, he advised in a deep voice.

"Dawn is approaching! The Mexica will soon recover. Tonight's achievements are enough; we must take more Tree Snake samurai back!...The City Lord is still on the city wall, waiting for us!"

Hearing this, Telavito finally calmed down. He panted heavily, retreating several steps, glaring fiercely at Texiwhit, who silently blocked with his shield, unable to resist cursing in anger.

"Damn it! You cowardly turtle! Only hiding behind a shield, utterly lacking in the glory of a warrior's death!"

"Huh? I'm not a turtle; I'm Turquoise Texiwhit."

Texiwhit lowered his shield, grinning steadily, like a mountain rock capable of smiling.

"You call yourself Bow Telavito? Turns out you're a despicable archer. The honorable Family Head ordered me to block you with a shield, and so I use a shield. But if it's a true duel without the shield, you may not be my match!"

"You!... "

Telavito glared angrily, ready to fight again.

"Quick, go! Dawn is near!"

Itz urged repeatedly, his expression full of anxiety. The brave Cloud Serpent Hunter bit his blood-stained lips, finally turning to retreat. In the Mexica camp, thousands of City-State Warriors had already

gradually recovered, no longer on the verge of collapse. As dawn approached, further delays would truly mean no retreat.

Before leaving, the Cloud Serpent Hunter reluctantly looked back. He gazed at the high-flying Tzompantli banner, watching the immovable elder Divine Descendant, trying hard to remember the opponent's appearance.

"Damn it! I swear to the Cloud Serpent, I will take your life!"

Telavito fiercely vowed silently, making a high-pitched oath in his heart. Texiwhit, with a faint, mock smile, moved his mountain-like steps, determined not to let the Cloud Serpent Hunter escape. On the other side, Xochitl coldly watched, a cold smile at the corner of his mouth, as if solidifying his murderous intent.

"Whosh!!"

At that moment, a bone arrow from the Tlaxcalans suddenly shot forth like a pre-dawn meteor, rising swiftly and accurately from some unknown location!

"Pff!..."

"Ah! Huh huh... "

In a flash, the cold smile on Xochitl's face vanished as his eyes widened suddenly. His pupils dilated rapidly, his body going limp, resembling an owl seeing the morning sun. He strained with all his might, barely able to move his eyes downward, only to see the half of a bone arrowhead piercing through his fragile throat...

"Huh huh!..."

A look of disbelief and despair appeared on Xochitl's face. He couldn't believe it, unwilling to believe he was about to die here!

The elder honorable nobility gasped painfully twice, didn't leave any last words, and then fell sideways under the great banner. Warm scarlet flowed from his neck, dyeing his grayish-white hair and sending his thoughts into icy, eternal slumber.

The first ray of morning light shot from the eastern horizon, falling into his still-open eyes, as if linking with the Tonali in his brain, taking away the Teyolia in his heart. It served as a staircase to the Divine Kingdom, guiding the unwilling soul away from an era past at the juncture where light and darkness intertwined~

Chapter 938: Glorious Death

Arrows flew, and the Legion Commander fell. In an instant, under the grand banner, there was a shocking silence. Moments later, the nearby Tzompantli trusted aides rushed over, their faces filled with despair and panic, shouting incredulously.

"Family Head!"

"Legion Commander!"

Seeing Xochitl fall, the face of Turquoise Texiwhit changed drastically. He immediately abandoned the Cloud Serpent hunter and turned, sprinting wildly toward the grand banner.

Telavito's face lit up with pleasure. He widened his eyes, trying to locate the warrior who shot the enemy. But in the flickering firelight, shadows danced and blurred, making it impossible to see clearly.

"Who? Who could have shot the Mexica Legion Commander and achieved such a great feat!"

"Such a divine archer must be one of the famous hunters of Tree Snake City!"

Itz watched for a moment, but found nothing. Yet, having achieved such merit in a night raid, it was enough to report to the City Lord.

"Telavito, stop looking! While the Mexica have lost their leader, let's go quickly! We'll inquire of the warriors upon our return to the city and handsomely reward the hunter who achieved such a great feat!"

"Hmm... Itz..."

Telavito tightened his grip on the Bronze Axe, looking at Itz beside him, murderous intent flickering in his eyes.

"The Mexica leader is dead, the warriors have lost their Commander-in-Chief. If we charge again..."

"... It's too late now! If only the enemy leader had been shot two quarters earlier, there might have been a chance."

Itz thought for a moment, then shook his head. He extended his hand, pointing to the different family-crested noble flags outside the Tzompantli grand banner.

"The sky is about to brighten, and these Mexica noble battle groups have slowly restored order. We don't have enough manpower, and without the cover of night, we can't break through them! ... Let's go quickly!"

"Two quarters earlier..."

Telavito reluctantly raised his head, looking at the chaos beneath the grand banner. If that warrior had managed to shoot the enemy leader earlier, they would have had a chance to completely defeat the Mexica legion! But at this moment...

"Ah! Let's go!"

The Cloud Serpent hunter sighed, turned around, and left. Without looking back, he led the remaining dozen or so Tree Snake warriors, retreating swiftly out of the camp. The nearby noble battle groups held tightly to their own banners, annihilating the scattered Tree Snake warriors, but no one took the initiative to pursue.

At the same time, where the dark arrow truly came from, a lean figure slung a longbow over their back, shuffling their steps, and disappearing amidst the chaotic battle. Toward the direction they headed, there was a banner second only to the Tzompantli grand banner. That banner depicted a towering spruce tree, with a cluster of red clouds at its top. The red cloud enveloped the tree, like a blood-colored eye, quietly watching everything unfold in the night under the moon and dawn.

A few quarters later, Telavito led the night-raiding warriors, taking a detour to the south gate, finally returning to Tree Snake City. On the retreat route, some Tree Snake warriors who hadn't lost their minds gradually joined his ranks. But upon truly returning to the city, a quick count revealed that of the five hundred Tree Snake warriors on the night raid, only a little over a hundred remained.

More than seventy percent of the elite night raiders either died in battle on the spot or scattered throughout the Mexica camp. And when the sky brightened, the fate of these brave warriors in the enemy camp was only to head to the Divine Kingdom of the Cloud Serpent. This era's night raids and battles were this brutal!

City Lord Okote stood at the city wall, watching the firelight outside the city, waiting through the entire half-night. When the morning sun rose and the sky brightened, Telavito appeared before him again, kneeling with a "bang."

"City Lord! Telavito did not disappoint your expectations! ... Cloud Serpent's protection! We fought through the enemy camp, killed the Mexica Commander-in-Chief, and returned!"

The cloak on Cloud Serpent hunter was stained red with blood. His splendid war clothes were also tattered, damaged beyond recognition. Yet, when he raised his head and chest, confidently reporting loudly, the bustling crowd on the walls of Tree Snake City fell silent.

"Good! Very good! Telavito, my warrior, you are a true warrior, a sacred hunter blessed by the Cloud Serpent! ... Haha!"

City Lord Okote's face beamed with joy, laughing out loud. He glanced around, looking at the spirited expressions of the city's warriors, pondered for a moment, and then announced loudly.

"The night raid's great victory was bestowed upon us by the Cloud Serpent! Tlahtolli, as the leader, has received divine grace, ascending to hereditary nobility! The deputy leader Itz fought bravely in battle and is equally promoted! The warrior who killed the enemy leader will also be elevated to nobility! As for the other returning warriors, each shall receive rich rewards..."

Then, Okote paused. He turned around and looked at the valiant Cloud Serpent hunter for a moment before making up his mind to once again inspire the city's military spirit.

"From today, Tlahtolli is my son-in-law, a divine descendant of the Cloud Serpent! I will marry my youngest daughter to him!... The Cloud Serpent shields us, Tree Snake City is impregnable, as steady as the majestic Divine Mountain!"

"The Cloud Serpent shields us, steady as the Divine Mountain!"

The stirring cheers echoed atop Tree Snake City, carrying the Tlaxcalan people's resolve to resist to the end. Afterward, Telavito and Itz searched through the night raid troops but couldn't find the hunter who made great contributions. It was likely that he was lost in the Mexica encampment, with no chance of escape.

Miles away, the slaughter at the Tzompantli camp had just ceased. The scattered Tlaxcalan warriors within the camp had all been killed, their bodies piled together as sacrifices to the supreme Chief Divine. The nobles regrouped the camp, a thousand out of four thousand militiamen were lost, and the rest were scattered entirely. Moreover, more than a thousand out of over three thousand city-state warriors were lost or scattered in the chaotic night raid, truly a calamitous loss.

The alliance's noble banners fluttered tattered, the camp was filled with grief and despair, a symphony of cries arose. Amid these chaotic cries, there were heartfelt wails, insincere sobs without tears, and hurried, ambivalent emotions.

Two days later, King Aweit received the news and led his thirty-thousand strong army to arrive beneath Tree Snake City. He appeared solemn, expressionless, and immediately went to the camp to inspect Xochitl's corpse. The once proud honorable nobility now lay quietly on a wooden bed, wearing sturdy bronze armor, but his neck was stained with unremovable blood.

Observing this scene, King Aweit pursed his lips and remained silent for a while before speaking solemnly.

"...The honorable noble Xochitl died gloriously on the battlefield, a warrior's honorable death. Guided by the Chief Divine, he went to the red kingdom, eternally enjoying peace and beauty!... Chief Divine bless!"

Upon hearing this, the generals all bowed their heads, collectively mourning and paying respects to the highest first-level commander fallen since the eastern expedition.

"Chief Divine bless! May he eternally enjoy beauty!..."

King Aweit lowered his eyes, deeply grieving on his face. After a while, he opened his eyes and looked towards the great nobility in the Tzompantli legion. The king's gaze lingered on the middle-aged noble at the front for a moment before ordering deeply.

"From today, the Tzompantli legion will be overseen by the honorable noble, Yunshan Clan Chief Huitzilihuitl!"

Upon hearing this appointment, the Tzompantli nobles looked at each other, somewhat surprised but without opposition. Xochitl's eldest son was not in the army, thus Yunshan Clan Chief Huitzilihuitl was indeed the most suitable successor, and also one of their own in the city-state.

In Navajo, "Huitzilihuitl" means a flowering fruit tree, while "Xochitl" signifies a tree in the sour fruit forest. Just by the names, one can discern their close kinship. In reality, Huitzilihuitl was the nephew of Xochitl's grandfather, also the second-ranked great noble in Tzompantli City after Xochitl.

Upon hearing his name, Yunshan Clan Chief Huitzilihuitl retracted his sadness and appeared somewhat excited. He stepped forward, kneeling on one knee, and respectfully lowered his head in salute.

"Honorable king, Huitzilihuitl obeys your command! I will reorganize the Tzompantli legion, fighting valiantly for the supreme sun!"

"Mm. Do well! Huitzilihuitl, I have always trusted your work!"

King Aweit's expression shifted slightly, nodding slowly. Then, with a smile, he reached out and touched Huitzilihuitl's hair.

"Quickly regroup the scattered militia and warriors, reorganize the Tzompantli legion... Next, join me in taking over Tree Snake City, blood-sacrificing the nobles within... offering to the immortal elders, avenging the brave Xochitl Legion Commander!"

"Yes! Obeying you!"

Huitzilihuitl lowered his head, eyes flashing. Moments later, he raised his head, carrying anger and murderous intent, loudly addressing the surrounding Tzompantli nobles.

"Capture Tree Snake City, blood-sacrifice the nobles within! Offer to the immortal elders, avenge the brave Xochitl Legion Commander!"

"Besiege the city... blood-sacrifice... offering... revenge!"

Soon, under the guidance of the accompanying priest, the furious shouts of the Mexica warriors echoed throughout the tens of thousands of troops in the camp! The sound was like the roar of waves, akin to thunder in the sky, carrying the will to destroy everything!

King Aweit did not wait, nor did he hesitate; his heart was as hard as iron stone, already prepared for everything. Early the next morning, when the simple siege ladders were finally transported from the camp outside Feathered Serpent City to beneath Tree Snake City, the tens of thousands of Mexica legion immediately commenced their ruthless siege!

Chapter 939: Battle of Tree Snake City, the Bloody and Brutal Meat Grinder!

"Boom! Boom!..."

Thunder rumbles, echoing in the sky full of dark clouds, like the roar of the Storm God, heralding the peak of the rainy season.

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

The sound of cannons erupts from the Mexica army's siege formation, like the wrath of the God of Thunder, bringing the calls of impending death!

"Crack!... Ah!..."

Accompanied by the thunder of heaven and earth, eight round stone bullets are ejected from the golden copper beast's mouth, with unstoppable force, smashing into the stubbornly defended head of Tree Snake City. The eight or nine-meter high walls have long been stained with blood, everywhere are the solidified dark red flesh and the scorch marks from flames.

"Cloud Serpent bless me!"

Seeing the stone bullets approaching, the brave Cloud Serpent Hunter has no choice but to crouch down immediately to avoid, praying anxiously to the God of the Hunt. Although these stone bullets are few in number, they carry immense force, and once they hit the defending army at the city head, they bring inevitable death! Even the bravest Tlaxcalan warriors cannot resist them in the slightest!

Just a few moments later, the heavy stone bullets shoot fiercely. The large shields and wooden boards erected at the city head are instantly broken, followed by wailing cries that don't sound human!

"Ah!... Ugh! ... Crash..."

The stone bullets shatter the wooden shields, countless shattered wood pieces fly backward, like blades, cutting through the exposed bodies of the militia, bursting forth with a mist of blood. Facing the Mexica's divine weapon, dozens of militias around are horrified, desperately fleeing to the sides, even jumping off the city head.

The overseer Tlaxcalan warriors wear a gloomy expression, and the war club comes down, killing the fleeing militia. Then, more numb-eyed moth citizens are driven forth, filling the battle lines at the city head. After days of hellish fighting, the Tlaxcalan nobility have long understood that the copper beast's

bombardment is only the prelude to a siege, followed by overwhelming arrow suppression and increasingly fierce ant-like storming of the city!

"Thump, thump thump!..."

The intense war drums drum loudly, and the Mexica legions on all sides begin to move. The city head's Tlahtolli looks for a moment, then tightens his lips and grips the longbow firmly.

"Damn Mexica, disregarding any casualties and attacking from all sides again! How can the noble lives of warriors be consumed like mere fodder?"

"Thump thump thump!..."

"Chief Divine bless! Fight for the King!"

Two thousand Mexica longbowmen of the Royal Longbow Legion shout in unison, divided into four teams of five hundred each, advancing close to the four walls under the cover of two thousand great shield warriors. These royal elites are clad in cloth medium armor, wearing bronze helmets, and run with small steps, keeping their heads down, until they reach fifty paces from the city wall and shoot arrows towards the city head.

"Swish swish swish!..."

The rain of arrows from the city head whistles first from above. Thousands of Tlaxcalan bone arrows shoot like dark clouds, hitting the wooden shields of the great shield warriors, making a series of muffled "tok tok" sounds. Among the muffled sounds, there's also the clinking of metal collisions.

Among the Tlaxcalans in Tree Snake City, there are clearly many elite hunters. They can accurately shoot through the gaps in wooden shields, hitting vital spots on the head and chest. Unfortunately, facing opponents covered in copper armor, the damage hunters can inflict is very limited.

Tlahtolli squints, aiming for a while before fitting a precious copper arrow, and shoots.

"Swish!"

A Mexica Royal Family archer suddenly pauses, the greatbow in his hands drops weakly. He struggles to reach out, trying to touch the pain in his neck, but loses all strength, leaning softly to the ground, soon without breath.

"Phew!"

Tlahtolli exhales deeply, quickly glances twice, and immediately lowers his figure, hiding behind the erected wooden planks. In the entire Tree Snake City, there are few Tlaxcalan warriors skilled enough in archery to injure copper-armored archers. This round of carefully prepared feathered arrows only caused the death of a dozen, while the retaliatory rain of arrows from the enemy is imminent and fiercer!

"Swish swish swish!..."

The copper-armored archers continue without pause, enduring the enemy's rain of arrows, firing their bows at the city head in unison! Sharp copper arrows bring the call of the God of Death, sweeping over the densely packed city head, immediately causing the deaths of dozens of militia. These defending militia have no armor, at most they wear cloth clothes. Without the cover of the wooden shields at the city head, they are the best targets.

"Thump thump thump!..."

Above and below the city head, archers exchange fire, mutually suppressing each other. The arrows are rapidly consumed, and the archers' stamina quickly drains, reducing the frequency of their shooting. Meanwhile, the war drums beating in the Mexica legion grow increasingly urgent.

"With the Chief Divine's protection, the entire army attacks!"

King Aweit stood on the small hill southeast of Cloud Serpent City, personally waving down the command banner. In just a moment, four Mexica legions launched assaults on the city from the east, west, south, and north.

"With the Chief Divine's protection! Sacrifice for the elders, fight for the king!"

Outside the East City, two thousand copper-armored warriors of the Royal Legion carried tall ladders and were the first to attack. They were the true elite of the alliance, seasoned by many battles, their expressions steady. At this moment, they wore sturdy bronze armor, their steps unhurried, advancing under the Tree Snake City.

"With the Chief Divine's protection! Blood sacrifice to Tree Snake City, avenge the legion commander!"

Outside the South City, the Tzompantli Legion, with eight hundred warriors and a thousand militia, charged towards Tree Snake City fueled by the flames of revenge. Leading the vanguard was the tall and stout Texiwhit, resembling a North American bison in charge, his eyes red with fury, his intent to kill blazing like a fierce fire!

Respected Family Head Xochitl was treacherously shot dead in a night attack by the despicable Telascallans. The remaining few hundred Tzompantli trusted aides, awakening from their sorrow, were left with only one thought: storm the city and avenge the family head at all costs!

"With the Chief Divine's protection! Destroy the Telascanan nemesis in this battle!"

Assaulting the North City was Xintle's Reed Legion. The Reed Legion from Totonilco State had been fighting the Telascallans for years and were similarly attired. Over a thousand Reed warriors wore cotton armor and vine hats, carrying bows and arrows, while an equal number of militia carried ladders, crossing the filled stream to approach the towering city walls. To eliminate the eastern nemesis threatening the city-state, the Reed Legion spared no expense, with all elite warriors deployed.

"With the Chief Divine's protection! Offer a bloody sacrifice for the immortal Sun!"

Lastly, in charge of the West City was Pachjo's Gorge Gold Legion. Under the king's stern supervision, they deployed eight hundred warriors and a thousand militia as the first wave to storm the city.

"Damn Mexico! The siege has just begun today, yet they've already deployed over ten thousand warriors and militia!"

Ocote, Lord of Tree Snake City, worriedly muttered a silent prayer. Dressed in Chinese clothes, he stood on the thirty-meter-high twin pyramid, viewing the battlefield of the four cities in full swing.

On the fields outside the city, Mexica legion banners were everywhere; alliance warriors in dark green abounded. Lightning boomed in the sky, copper beast roared on the ground, feathered arrows crisscrossed into clouds, while ladders attacked like giant beasts, as if heralding the end of days!

Since that victorious night raid, over ten days had passed. Ten days ago, the Mexica Royal Banner came from the northeast mountain pass, leading tens of thousands of Mexica legions. Like the tides of the Eastern Great Lake, they surged to the base of Tree Snake City, enveloping the entire city in relentless attacks.

Under the Mexica King's strict orders, every alliance legion acted like madmen, disregarding their own losses. They drove laboring militia to fill moats and dispatched elite warriors, swarming the city walls daily without ceasing! The siege of Tree Snake City reached a fierce and brutal climax in just ten days!

The merciless slaughter continued day and night, the vanishing of souls unending. Noble nobles and warriors, like autumn leaves drifting away, trailed red and death as they painted the heights of the city walls.

To Ocote, the ruthless siege was like a grinding stone of flesh and blood, grinding thousands of living beings into a continuous spill of blood. Thousands of collapsed bodies accumulated at the foot of Tree Snake City, nearly lowering the tall city walls by a meter.

"Oh supreme Cloud Serpent! Please bless your citizens and bring down a torrential rain, protect the sacred Snake City, and let it survive under evil slaughter!"

Ocote looked toward the sky, yearning for rain to fall. Then, he turned to the Mexica Royal Banner to the southeast, seeing the "Evil Spirit Commander" emblem waving in the wind as if symbolizing death. At this moment, he devoutly prayed to the God of the Hunt, seeking the blessed protection of the Supreme God. For apart from divine intervention and rain, he had no other hope left.

"Today's siege will be an all-out assault! Do not stop the copper cannon bombardment, do not cease the archers' suppression! Use all gunpowder and arrows in this battle!"

Aweit stood firm under the Royal Banner, eyes blazing, staring at the pyramid temple in Tree Snake City. In the Mexica belief, only by burning the temples of enemy city-states and sacrificing the esteemed Divine Descendants of the enemy could conquest be considered complete!

"Before the rain arrives, I must take this city!"

The king's expression was cold as he glanced at the ominous clouds in the east. It was early July now, with at most two or three days before rains hindering the siege would arrive. And in over ten days, when the rainy season peaked in late July, the rain would flood the Trascal Basin. Time was running short for the alliance.

In the area of the three Snake Cities, his northern main forces comprised seven legions in total. Izel's Mountain Legion was the first to pledge loyalty to the king and captured the Lord of Feathered Serpent City, hence granted special treatment to guard the northern Cloud Serpent City. Meanwhile, his trusted General "Floral Carving" led a Royal Legion and over ten thousand militia to guard the northeastern White Snake City, maintaining the rear's supply line.

Apart from this, the remaining five legions, totaling over thirty thousand troops, gathered entirely under Tree Snake City. At this moment, accounting for the protective shooting of the Longbow Legion, five alliance legions, numbering over ten thousand warriors and militia, simultaneously launched attacks outside the four cities. And behind the over ten thousand vanguard, there was a rotating second formation of ten thousand troops, even a reserve third formation, truly an all-out force!

Recollecting for a moment, Aweit remained firm as jade, calmly scanning the battlefield before him.

In the fierce rain of arrows and hurled stones, ladders gradually reached the city head. And thousands of Mexica warriors, like ants, wielded weapons, climbing towards the city head with all their might. Constantly, warriors from both sides grappled and fell from the walls together, journeying to the Divine Kingdom.

"Scaling the city with ant-like resolve relies on courage and determination!"

Under devout faith and the opportunity for military advancement, Mexica warriors were full of courage for slaughter. In defending their homeland, the Telascalans were also filled with resolve. Both sides clashed, giving no inch, creating a bloody grindstone, brutally intense!

Chapter 940: Battle of Tree Snake City, Warriors Making a Desperate Assault

The dark clouds obscured the sun, casting a dim and gloomy light. The blood stained the ground, rendering the city walls dark red and slippery. The shouts of the Samurais resounded loudly, almost shattering the clouds. Meanwhile, the "rumble" of the cannons intermittently roared, with flames, smoke, and lives, marking the moments of brutal martial prowess!

"Boom boom boom!..."

The war drums beat more urgently, like the call of the Chief Divine. The Mexica Warriors, holding their shields, patiently waited a dozen steps away from the city walls. Meanwhile, thousands of Alliance militia risked the arrows and javelins from the city towers, arduously setting up tall ladders that hooked onto the top of Tree Snake City, only to be knocked down like weeds by the Defending Army. They rushed towards the flames like moths, using their lives to exhaust the city's stock of lime grenades, just to pave the final stretch of road for the Samurais' attack on the Divine Kingdom.

"Chief Divine protect us! Kill!"

Outside the eastern city, Royal Warriors, Vanguard General Moteloki, donning bronze medium armor and wielding a bronze great axe, was the first to climb the city tower. No sooner had he set foot on the tower than several militia stone spears simultaneously thrust at him, striking the armor on his chest and waist.

"Ding ding ding!"

A crisp clashing sound rang out powerfully, while another Samurai's copper spear came whistling towards his face.

Moteloki wavered a bit, and immediately crouched slightly to avoid the coming copper spear. Then, taking a deep breath, he ignored the barrage of stone spears, suddenly raising his great axe and slashing it fiercely in a diagonal strike.

"Sizzle! Puff! Swoosh!..."

The enormous bronze great axe slashed ferociously, tearing through the cotton armor of a Tree Snake warrior, ripping apart the fragile body, then bursting into a spray of blood mist! In almost the blink of an eye, the blocking Tlaxcala warrior was cut down with one axe swing. Then, Moteloki advanced almost without defense, hacking furiously. He slaughtered four militiamen in succession, clearing a blood-drenched breach on the crowded city wall!

After a short while, a dozen copper armor warriors climbed up steadily to this section of Tree Snake City wall, securing their position. Meanwhile, several similar breaches appeared successively on the eastern city wall.

"Heavy armor warriors! Heavy armor warriors! Mexica's heavy armor warriors have climbed up again!"

The Tlaxcala militia on the city tower cried out in fear and panic. These recent days, they had already proved with countless lives that even with numbers, the poorly equipped militia could not stand against the heavy armor warriors once they reached the city tower. Only warriors armed with sharp copper spears and heavy war clubs could barely resist by sheer numbers.

"Out of the way! Make way!"

Cloud Serpent hunter Tlahtolli roared repeatedly, leading sixty to seventy Tree Snake trusted aides as they rushed over from a nearby city tower. The east city was the attack direction of the Mexican Royal Legion, where the finest five hundred Tree Snake warriors were deployed. Their most important task was to fend off the enemy's copper armor warriors.

It must be known that these days, at least half of the losses among the defending warriors were caused by the climbing copper armor warriors. These fierce enemies, clad in sturdy armor and wielding great axes, unleashed an unstoppable assault like wild brown bears. And to deal with such enemies, only...

Tlahtolli gripped tightly with both hands, using his shoulders to lift a massive long-handled stone hammer. The stone hammer weighed over ten pounds, and even with Tlahtolli's strength, he could swing it for no more than ten minutes. Behind him, among the Tree Snake warriors, half held heavy wooden shields, while the other half wielded heavy stone hammers.

Moments later, they rushed to a breach where the enemy had climbed. Amidst the flying arrows and booming stones, Tlahtolli surged forward, raised the stone hammer high, let out a fierce roar, and swung it down with precise and powerful force.

"Cloud Serpent protect us!"

"Bang!!"

A dull metallic clash instantly echoed on the city wall, causing one's bones to ache. A copper armor warrior was struck heavily, his chest immediately caved in, and he spat blood. His eyes widened in red fury, unwillingly gazing at the Cloud Serpent hunter, then fell backward, swiftly heading to the Divine Kingdom.

"Bang! Bang!"

Dozens of Cloud Serpent trusted aides surged forward. The warriors with shields engaged the Royal copper armor warriors in close combat, while the stone hammer warriors launched armor-piercing heavy strikes. The copper armor warriors' counterattacks were equally deadly. A stone hammer warrior had just lifted his weapon when a sharp bronze axe faced him, slashing straight through his neck!

The elite warriors of both sides clashed resolutely on the city wall, life and death decided in an instant. Large swathes of crimson quickly scattered in the wind, reflecting the rainy season's dense clouds, resembling a blood-red and spectacular rain.

"Huff, huff!"

Tlahtolli, leading the Tree Snake trusted aides, used equal casualties to defeat a squad of copper armor warriors and temporarily pushed the enemy's ladder off the city tower. Gasping heavily, he recovered his rapidly depleted strength and surveyed the situation elsewhere on the city tower.

Quickly, he saw the most dangerous breach: dozens of Mexica warriors in heavy armor were, under the lead of a great axe warrior, relentlessly breaking through the Defending Army, slashing forward!

"Go! For the Cloud Serpent, charge with me!"

Tlahtolli roared, leading the remaining trusted aides, and hurriedly charged towards the breach. Quickly, the elite warriors of both sides engaged in fierce combat on the narrow city wall. The valiant Cloud Serpent hunters swiftly and powerfully raised their heavy stone hammers and delivered a strike!

"Bang!"

Moteloki, full of murderous intent, brandished his copper axe, violently swinging it to meet the incoming stone hammer. In Navajo, Moteloki's name means a berserker fighting to the death, without any defense.