



CHAPTER ONE



Crush your enemy totally




In this chapter, Robert Greene emphasizes the importance of completely annihilating your enemies to prevent future retaliation. He draws on historical examples to illustrate how leaving any enemy intact can lead to their eventual resurgence and revenge. The narrative warns against mercy and hesitation when dealing with adversaries, advocating for a ruthless approach to power. Leaders like Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang reveal the fatal consequences of allowing rivals to survive. Ultimately, Greene argues that the law of total victory is key to maintaining power and security.



Great leaders know that a feared enemy must be crushed entirely; a half-measure is more dangerous in the long run. Allowing even a single ember to remain can reignite conflicts. Eliminating an enemy's presence in both body and spirit is crucial for lasting peace.

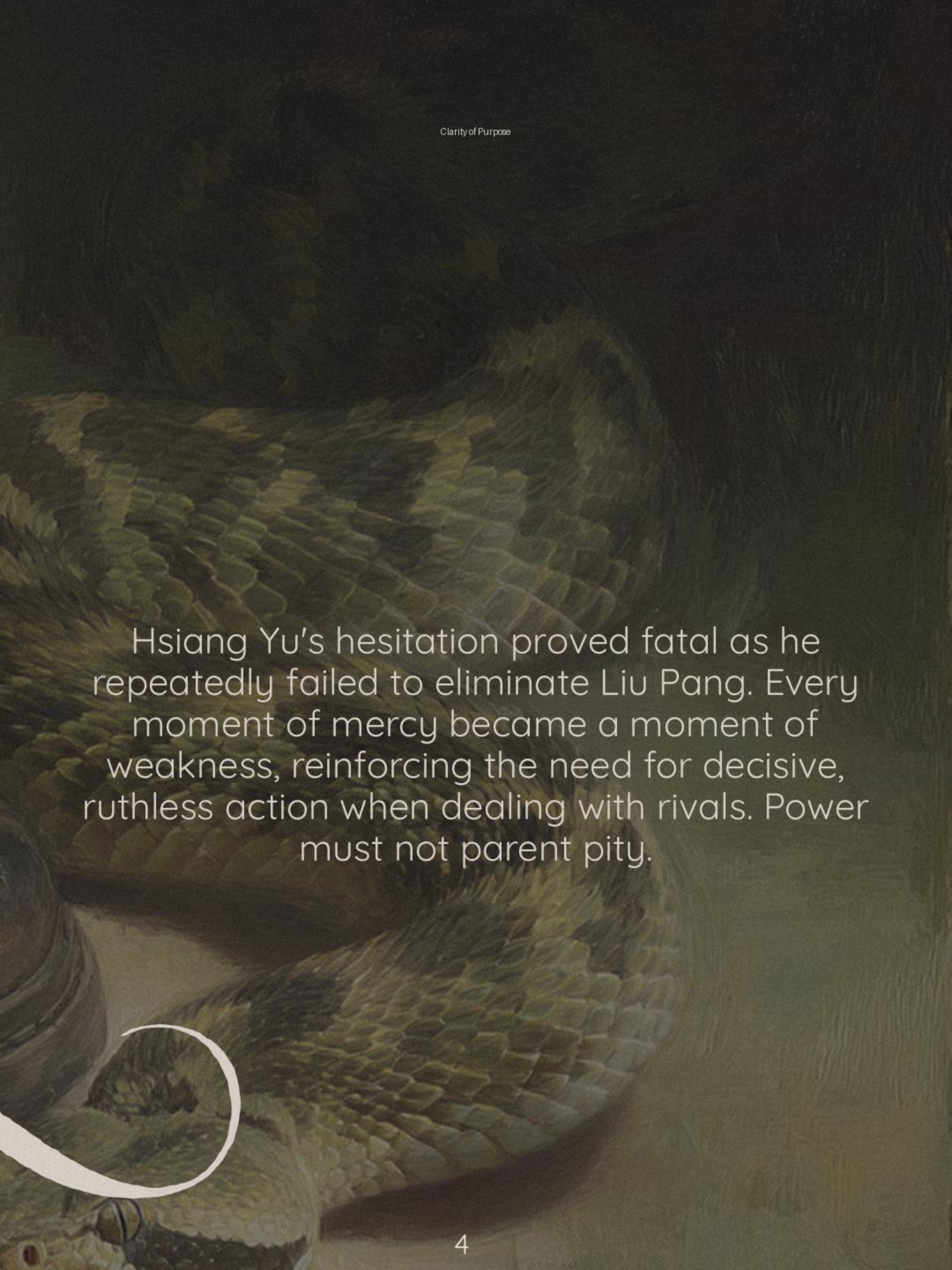
"All great leaders since Moses have known: if one ember is left alight, a fire will eventually break out."




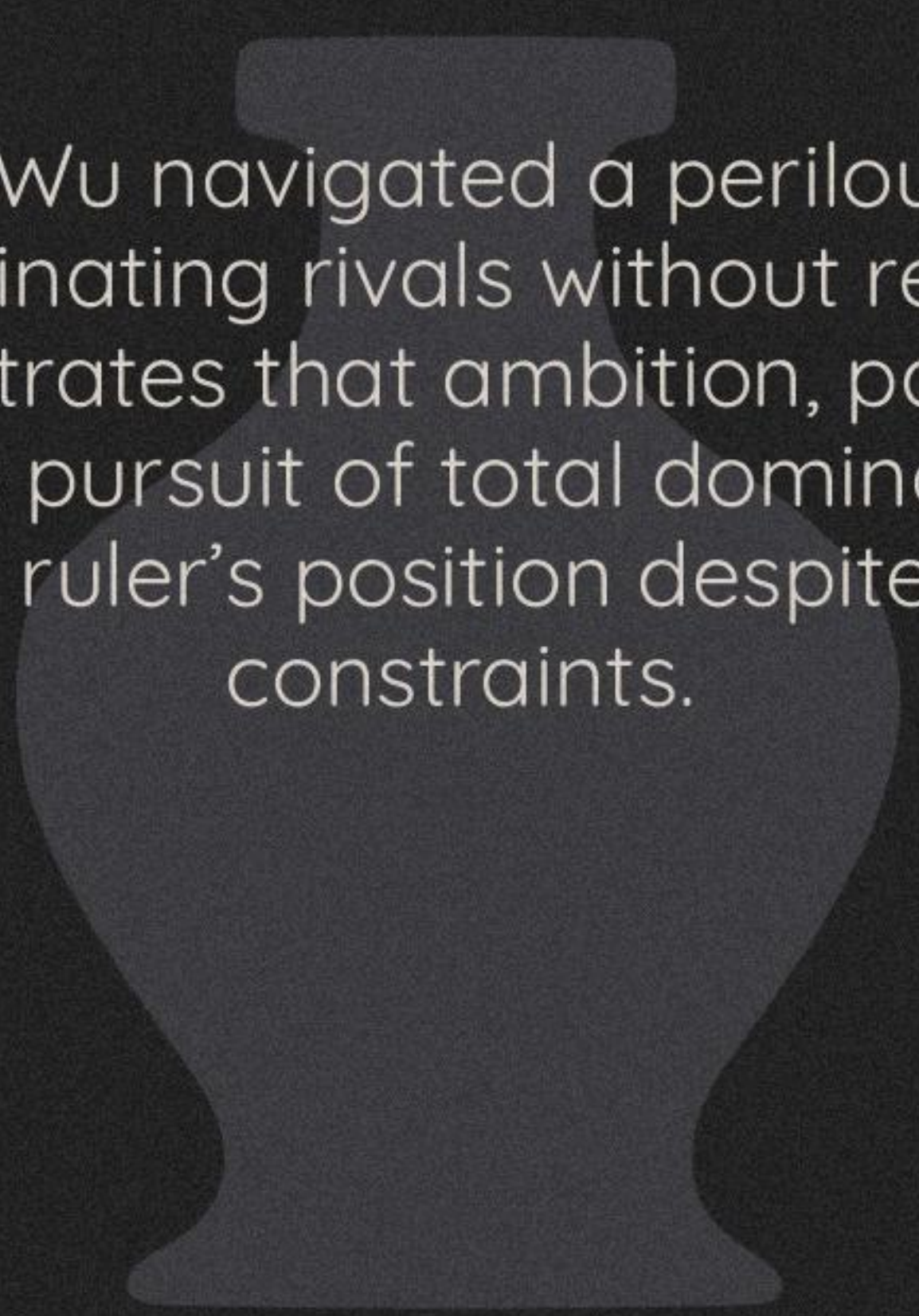
History teaches that leaving enemies even slightly intact can lead to their rebirth and revenge. Hsiang Yu's and Liu Pang's rivalry exemplifies how leniency can result in loss. By hesitating, one does not show strength but invites danger.

"The remnants of an enemy can become active like those of a disease or fire."

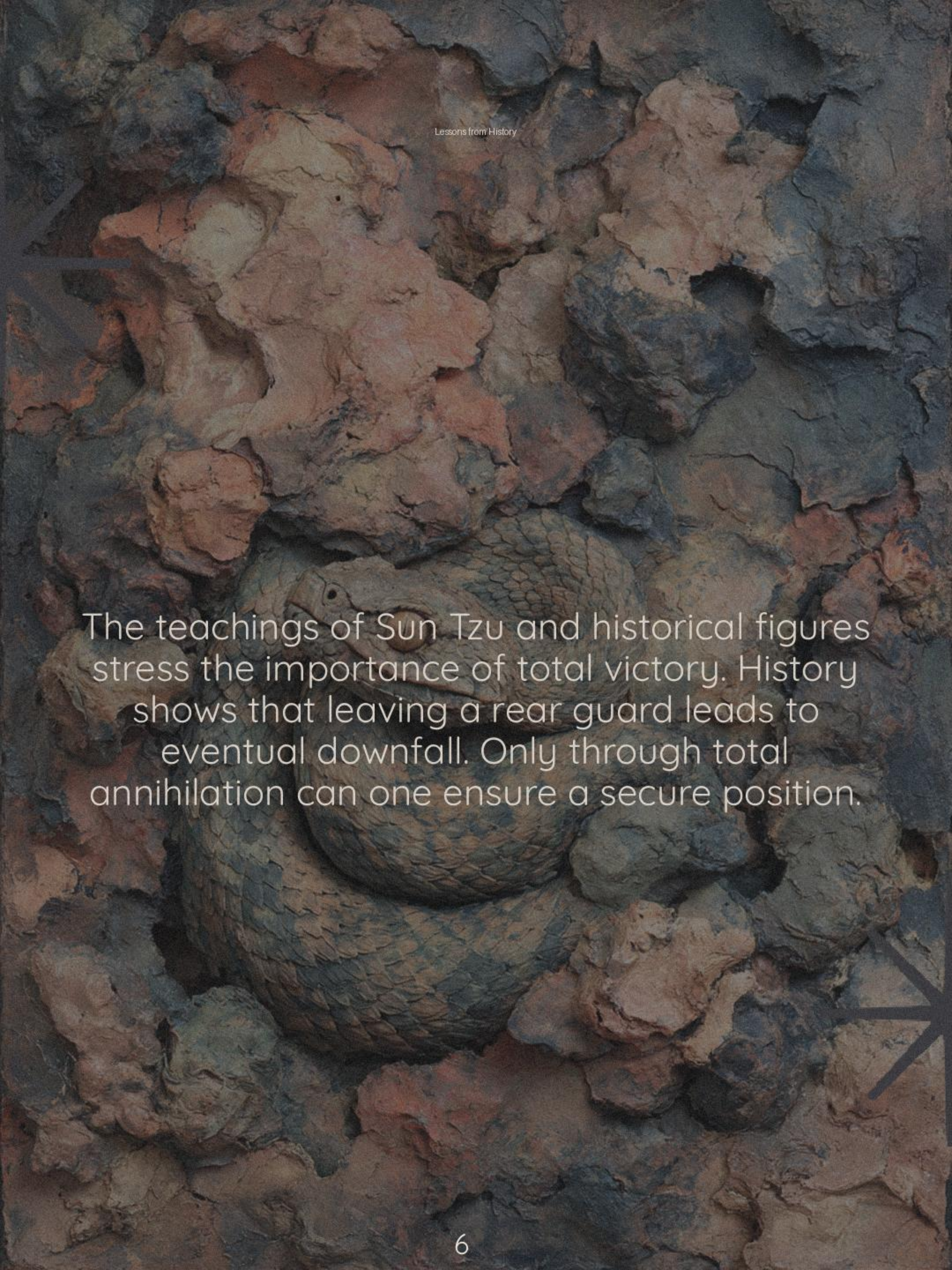
Cesare Borgia's cunning maneuver at Sinigaglia illustrates the art of deception in warfare. By outsmarting the condottieri who thought they had him trapped, Borgia turned their own strategy against them, demonstrating the necessity of total control over your enemies.



Hsiang Yu's hesitation proved fatal as he repeatedly failed to eliminate Liu Pang. Every moment of mercy became a moment of weakness, reinforcing the need for decisive, ruthless action when dealing with rivals. Power must not parent pity.



Empress Wu navigated a perilous path to power, eliminating rivals without remorse. Her ascent illustrates that ambition, paired with a relentless pursuit of total dominance, can secure a ruler's position despite societal constraints.



The teachings of Sun Tzu and historical figures stress the importance of total victory. History shows that leaving a rear guard leads to eventual downfall. Only through total annihilation can one ensure a secure position.

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Negotiation is a double-edged sword; it can erode achieved victories. By not crushing your enemy totally, you leave room for negotiations that can undermine your power. They thrive on the hope you provide them.



Embracing this law of total victory may come at a moral cost, yet it is essential for survival in the ruthless pursuit of power. Allowing enemies to remain is akin to inviting disaster; be ruthless to secure your reign.

- "All great leaders since Moses have known: if one ember is left alight, a fire will eventually break out."
 - "The remnants of an enemy can become active like those of a disease or fire."
 - "To have ultimate victory, you must be ruthless."
 - "Crush your enemies with no options for survival."
 - "The solution is simple: Allow your enemies no options."
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