

Perish 266

Chapter 266: Blind Date_2

"That's right!!" Nearly half of the women shouted in unison, laughing cheerfully.

"Then let's find our own seats and eat." Anfel said, ushering the other women to push and pull the shy and reserved newcomers into the resting area, immediately triggering cheers from the soldiers.

"Tini Bazus, you're hopeless. You can't even keep your own woman in check—why not hand her over to me?" said a Centurion, jesting.

The other Centurions laughed uproariously.

But Tini Bazus remained unfazed. His youthful days of performing for a living had thickened his skin. He reminded them, "Brothers, stop laughing like fools and get over there to help!"

After the boisterous commotion, the women all found places to sit down. The ones who already had a partner naturally paired up, while the seating for the single women was mostly arranged by Anfel.

After she was done, she sat down beside Tini Bazus, observing his expression before asking, "You're not upset, are you?"

"Upset about what? I'm thrilled." Tini Bazus grinned and motioned toward the back, whispering, "You assigned a few extra girls to my squad!"

"It's because you've been nagging incessantly in my ear these past few days. If I didn't do something, you'd have annoyed me to death!" Anfel pouted in mock complaint.

"Oh, come on, as the captain of a Centurion, I have to do something nice for my brothers. And who could blame me when my woman is the best cook we've got!" Tini Bazus said ingratiatingly.

"Nonsense. The best cook is, of course, our leader." Anfel chided him, though a smile flickered across her face.

"But—" Tini Bazus pointed to the side, speaking cautiously, "the girl you assigned to my good brother... isn't she a bit..."

Anfel showed no ire, instead responding with a question, "You think my pick is no good? Then tell me, who's better?"

Tini Bazus scanned the area and stealthily pointed not far away. "Her! That girl looks pretty decent—" He suddenly caught himself and added hastily, "Of course, nothing compared to you! But Samoras has saved my life on the battlefield many times; he's a true brother. If I'm going to set him up with a wife, it has to be a beautiful one, or people might say I'm ungrateful!"

"I get what you're saying." Anfel replied. "But do you know who that woman is?"

Tini Bazus shook his head. "How would I know?"

"She's from Segestica, and she's been married before. Her husband was a petty noble from that nearby village. Not long after their wedding, he died in the first battle between the Segestica people and us—"

"Ah!"

"Don't be fooled by her delicate and frail demeanor. She's crafty and always finds excuses to shirk work. We can't really manage her well... Your brother is naive and simple. If he marries her, she'll manipulate him however she pleases. What will you do then?"

Anfel spoke earnestly, "The girl I chose for Samoras is from the Skodisqi people. While she may not be very pretty, she grew up under the oppression of the Segestica people. She shares a similar background with your brother. Plus, she's honest, hardworking, and a good match for him. If they live together, they'll surely have a good life."

"But if both of them are too honest, won't that make it easier for others to take advantage of them?"
Tini Bazus still felt a touch of concern.

"With you around, if anyone manages to take advantage of the two of them, they'd really have justification to call you ungrateful!" Anfel reminded him.

Tini Bazus suddenly understood. "You're right—your arrangement is better!"

"Yet someone was complaining about my choices just earlier." Anfel pretended to pout and turned her head away in mock irritation.

"It's all my fault. I shouldn't have doubted your arrangements so carelessly. I deserve to be punished!"
Tini Bazus sincerely apologized, slapping his own cheeks with audible, crisp smacks.

Anfel hurriedly grabbed his hand, scolding, "You and your silly antics! People might think I'm bullying you! I'm starving now!"

"I'll fetch food for you right away." Tini Bazus immediately picked up the pottery jar and wooden bowl Anfel had brought and ran off to the front of the line with a cheerful gait.

Meanwhile, Samoras had already returned with food for the woman seated beside him.

Due to the promise she made to Tini Bazus, Anfel couldn't just sit back and watch for amusement—especially since those two couldn't communicate with each other. She had to act as translator and do some matchmaking herself.

The rebel army led by Maximus, before retreating into the mountains, had a composition where about half were Illyrians, with the rest hailing from various parts of the Mediterranean. Because most of them had been in Italy for years, they could more or less speak Latin, so daily communication was largely in Latin.

However, after entering the mountains, whether Aldeans, Pannonians, or Skodisqi people, all could speak Illyrian. This gave Illyrian soldiers within the rebel army a significant advantage during this matchmaking dinner since there were no language barriers.

This also spurred soldiers from other regions to begin painstakingly learning Illyrian, for they had gradually realized: if they wanted to find a wife, have children, and build a good life here, they first had to overcome the language hurdle.

The soldiers' resting area often featured a peculiar scene: couples would sit together during the meal, whispering quietly and sharing intimate gestures;

single soldiers, meanwhile, would gather in groups of six or seven around a single woman, eagerly competing to serve her and talk to her—even if they'd just started learning Illyrian and could only speak it haltingly, they would still strive to demonstrate their best;

and a rare few like Samoras, who had the backing of both his superior and the head chef, enjoyed one-on-one privileges...

Just as the dinner and matchmaking event was in full swing, someone suddenly noticed the Legion Commander Torrelugo striding toward them with another individual, prompting a stir among the crowd.

For the person accompanying him was none other than Valgius, a subordinate of Military Judge Sedonius, whose arrival usually signaled that someone had broken military law and was about to face punishment.

Lufus was just about to get up to greet them when Torrelugo waved him down. He brought Valgius to the center of the First Battalion's resting area and stood firmly, declaring in a loud voice, "Brothers, you can keep eating, but perk up your ears and listen carefully, because what's about to be announced is extremely important!"

"Legion Commander, no matter how important it is, can't we wait until after we've finished eating?" someone grumbled from the crowd.

"We have to make announcements battalion by battalion. There's no time to wait for you all to finish eating." Torrelugo, hands on his hips, retorted loudly, "You have good food here to eat and women to chat with—life's plenty comfortable for you! But I've been in the command tent discussing strategy with the leader all day, and I haven't even had a sip of water yet, so stop complaining!"

"But we've also spent the whole day chopping wood in the mountains. We're all tired," someone else murmured.

Torrelugo lost his temper. "Those who don't want to listen can take their food and leave the camp to eat outside—it's quiet there, no one will bother you. But don't regret it later!"

Instantly, the resting area fell silent.

Torrelugo then gestured invitingly to Valgius and stepped aside.

Valgius, a Roman veteran, had joined the rebel army back in Apulia. Since he hailed from the Illyria Province, he was literate, fluent in Illyrian, possessed an excellent memory, and had a booming voice. This led to his selection by Legal Officer Sedonius and his promotion—with Maximus's approval—just recently to Law Deputy Officer. He had now been explicitly tasked with announcing the decrees.

"In recent days, for the betterment of our entire army, the leader has formulated several significant decrees. After extensive discussions with various department chiefs, these have officially been finalized as of today. I have been appointed to communicate these new decrees to every brother here. I believe that after hearing them, you'll all be as thrilled as I am!"

Chapter 267: Announcing the New Decree

Valgius spoke passionately, "The first decree: We will settle here in the form of a tribe, officially naming the tribe as Nix. From now on, we can claim to outsiders that 'we are the Nix people'! The Dragon Flag you raised during the battle with the Pannonians earlier is the official flag of the Nix Tribe."

"Nix, this name sounds smooth. What does it mean?"

"Can't we keep calling ourselves Free Italy?"

"Oh, that beast on the flag is a dragon?! It's drawn so well, looks almost alive—quite scary!"

"You don't know, do you? It was painted by the leader himself."

"What?! The leader can paint?!"

...

Everyone began discussing noisily.

"What's all this noise?! Quiet down! Listen to Valgius finish speaking, then ask questions!" Torrelugo shouted, restoring silence to the resting area once again.

"The second decree—" Valgius continued, "Leader Maximus is the chief of the Nix Tribe. All significant matters within the tribe require his final decision before implementation. No one is allowed to challenge his authority; violators will be punished according to the severity of their offense!"

Regarding this decree, the soldiers and women present not only did not have any objections, but were somewhat puzzled: Everyone had always regarded Maximus as their leader, so why was it necessary to state this explicitly?

In fact, when this decree was brought up for discussion, some department chiefs harbored similar doubts. The reasoning that Maximus provided was: The Nix Tribe would inevitably grow larger, with more people joining the tribe. They would no longer be as mutually acquainted as the original members. To ensure newcomers follow orders and recognize authority instead of acting independently, it was crucial they understand from the outset who the tribal leader is, along with the heads of various departments...

But in reality, anyone with political insight would know that a leader relying on prestige and social convention is entirely different from a leader mandated by law and demanded obedience from the populace.

This second decree was quickly approved by the department chiefs not only due to Maximus' accumulated prestige but also because of the third decree.

"The third decree: The Nix Tribe will establish nine departments to manage various tribal affairs. The first department is the Agricultural Department, responsible for overseeing the distribution of farmland, planting, and animal husbandry... After consultation between Leader Maximus and other key figures, Volenus has been appointed as the head of the Agricultural Department; the second department is the Public Works Department..." Valgius spoke clearly and fluently, concisely summarizing the roles and chiefs of the nine departments for the audience.

This decree stirred waves among the crowd.

For most soldiers, their previous concerns were primarily personal matters like food, accommodation, and weapons. They rarely paid attention to the power shifts within the rebel army's leadership. Aside from Leader Maximus and their immediate supervisors, they were largely indifferent to changes within the army's higher ranks. Being long relegated to the social lower class, they hadn't developed political sensitivity and typically obeyed orders as long as the tasks weren't too troublesome, rather than questioning them.

The women, even more so.

However, this time the situation was slightly different. While most people remained indifferent to the appointment of department chiefs, women from the kitchen crew raised a question: "Why is Female Camp Captain Karina appointed as the chief of Civil Affairs Department, but our leader (referring to Acronis) isn't included in these appointments?"

These women were under Karina's management during nighttime accommodations in the Female Camp, as well as during marching commands. Karina's strict governance had led to moments of reprimand, and naturally, some dissatisfaction among them. Moreover, Karina was initially subordinate to Acronis, so their objections were hardly surprising.

Valgius offered only two sentences in response: "Acronis has already been appointed by Leader Maximus as the Chief of Internal Affairs, responsible for managing the leader's household affairs."

The women, led by Anfel, immediately quieted down.

Anfel, drawing from her own experience as a female slave, naturally believed that Acronis had made the optimal choice—no job was better than directly serving the leader.

Now that the tribe would settle here and prepare for an independent lifestyle, several departments were closely tied to their lives, prompting questions from the crowd. The most commonly asked one was: Why impose a land tax?

Valgius had deliberately brought up the "Tithes" taxation policy when explaining the Finance Department's duties, under prior instruction from Maximus, as a way to gauge the public's reaction.

In the preceding days, Maximus had instructed department heads to spread the news about the "Tithes" among their subordinates and prepared them to offer explanations to anyone who reacted strongly.

Perhaps due to these efforts, when the policy was officially announced, people kept asking questions but were able to control their emotions.

Valgius then conveyed Maximus' earlier explanations to the department leaders with an even more tactful tone, concluding with the words: "...Leader Maximus stated that these taxes come from you and will be used for you. He will soon enact a law allowing you to appoint representatives annually to oversee how these taxes are spent, to prevent any corruption..."

Chapter 268: Proclaiming the New Decree_2

Valgius's words made everyone hesitate.

At this moment, Torrelugo shouted loudly: "Any questions you have, wait until the decree has been fully explained before asking. Valgius, hurry up, our Second Legion still has five battalions waiting for you!"

With this, the resting area regained its silence, though many remained distracted in their thoughts.

Valgius cleared his throat and, energized, spoke loudly: "Decree No. 4: The Twenty Peerage System! Beginning tomorrow, all tribe members will be ranked at twenty different levels, starting from the lowest Reserve Tribe Members, and ascending consecutively to Ordinary Tribe Members, Second-class

Tribe Members, First-class Tribesmen, Knights, Third-class Barons, Second-class Barons, First-class Barons, Third-rank Viscounts, Second-class Viscounts, First-class Viscounts, Third-rank Earls, Second-class Earls, First-class Earls, Third-rank Marquises, Second-class Marquises, First-class Marquises, Third-class Dukes, Second-class Dukes, and finally the highest rank, First-class Dukes.

In recent days, those newly joining the tribe are categorized as Reserve Tribe Members. Their personal safety is protected by the tribe; no one is allowed to violate it. Their food, clothing, housing, and daily necessities are provided by the tribe, but they must follow the tribe's arrangement and work for the benefit of the tribe. If they demonstrate good behavior within three years of joining, they will be promoted to Ordinary Tribe Members.

If Reserve Tribe Members show achievements or make significant contributions during the three-year period, the time required for promotion can be shortened. From now on, anyone joining the tribe will start as a Reserve Tribe Member."

Are there any Reserve Tribe Members among the audience?

Of course there are—those newly joined female slaves who recently escaped the oppression of the Skodisqi people. Now part of the Nix Tribe, their lives have transformed dramatically compared to before. The gratitude swelling in their hearts left them unable to raise objections.

"All members of Free Italy who followed Leader Maximus in defeating the Romans and journeyed through the long march to arrive here are Ordinary Tribe Members of the Nix Tribe! The tribe will allocate fifty acres of fertile land to every Ordinary Tribe Member. This land can be passed down to their descendants, owned for generations, but it cannot be sold..."

The resting area erupted: the rumors circulating over the past days turned out to be true—fifty acres! Just how large would fifty acres of land be?! And how much wheat could be harvested in a year?! It was the kind of dream beyond imagination in their former lives, yet now it was about to come true!

The excitement wasn't confined merely to the average rebel soldiers—even a battalion leader like Lufus, who had once been a Roman citizen, couldn't suppress his delight.

It should be noted that while Roman law stipulated that Roman citizens could not lease more than 125 hectares of state-owned land, in reality, most Roman farmers leased less than 7.5 hectares. And

considering Italy's landscape, with its scarcity of plains and abundance of mountainous terrain, most of the farmland allocated to Roman citizens consisted of hills.

A Roman veteran like him, due to his allegiance to Dictator Sulla, had only been granted less than twenty acres of land on the Campagna Plain, which could hardly compare to the fifty acres of fertile black soil promised by the tribe. Lufus had personally seen the land along the Kupa River—it was genuinely fertile black soil, truly private property safeguarded by the tribe. Unlike his allotment in Lukelia, which had been seized by the nobles...

"Ordinary Tribe Members, apart from enjoying the rights granted by the tribe, must fulfill their duties, including paying taxes on time, conducting regular military training, obeying orders, and participating in wars..." Valgius emphasized, raising his voice: "In fierce battles, killing one armored enemy will result in promotion to Second-class Tribe Members, and the tribe will allocate an additional ten acres of fertile land..."

Initially, the requirement for promotion to Second-class citizens was merely to kill an enemy. However, during deliberations on the Twenty Peerage System, most department chiefs argued that the weapons and military skills of the tribe's soldiers far exceeded those of the Pannonians. Killing Pannonian Light Infantry would be far too easy, risking a situation where everyone quickly became Knights, rendering the tribe's hierarchical system meaningless. Thus, the standard was raised to killing armored enemies, as defeating Pannonian Heavy Infantry presented a greater challenge.

But for rebel soldiers, whose confidence had been nurtured through successive victories, killing an armored soldier wasn't much harder than killing a regular enemy. What excited them most was the confirmation of previous rumors circulating in the camp: fifty acres was just the beginning. By achieving merit in battle, they could earn more rewards and land, climb the hierarchy, and command respect from their peers, becoming figures of admiration!

This fervor created a peculiar phenomenon at the gathering; while everyone listened intently, each time Valgius listed the conditions for promotion to a higher rank, the crowd would erupt into cheers, as though they had already achieved it.

When Valgius finally concluded the explanation of the Twenty Peerage System, questions bombarded him like an avalanche. Even Torrelugo's repeated roars failed to restore order to the resting area.

In the end, Torrelugo simply pulled Valgius away, calming the overly enthusiastic crowd somewhat.

"Ask one by one! If you fail to maintain order, I'll take Valgius to the next battalion immediately!" Torrelugo threatened loudly.

The crowd finally clammed up, though their faces flushed with excitement, their fiery gazes fixed on Valgius with an intensity that could almost melt him.

"Let the Centurions of each squad take turns asking according to their unit number," Torrelugo declared.

As soon as Torrelugo finished speaking, Tini Bazus stood up: "I'd like to ask, if I kill a foe during battle, how would the tribe verify it and promote my tribal citizen rank?"

"There are two methods," Valgius replied. "One is to cut off the left ear of the foe killed. The other is to retrieve the helmet of the foe. After the battle, submit these to the officers from the Military Department and Civil Affairs Department responsible for recording merits. They will personally inspect the battlefield, verify your merit by questioning your superior and the comrades fighting to your left and right. Once confirmed, the report is submitted to the tribe, and upon the leader's approval, your tribal citizen rank will be advanced, along with the appropriate rewards.

Be warned: if your claimed battle achievements are found to be falsified, not only will you face punishment under Military Law, but your tribal citizen rank will also be downgraded. So please, everyone, do not let greed for glory ruin your future within the tribe. As for other ways to prove your merit in battle, Legion Commander Torrelugo has participated in discussions on this matter and can provide further details later."

"That's right!" Torrelugo immediately affirmed. "The rest of you, refrain from asking similar questions again. Save time—next!"

"Apart from Reserve Tribe Members and Ordinary Tribe Members, does our tribe currently have other ranks, like Knights, or Barons, Viscounts, and so on?"

"No." Valgius emphatically replied: "Everyone remains Ordinary Tribe Members, including your Legion Commander. Leader Maximus has declared that everyone within the tribe starts as Reserve Tribe Members or Ordinary Tribe Members, advancing based on their own abilities.

The Nix Tribe currently has no nobles, but someday, through your efforts, you could become New Nobles of the tribe. These nobles won't rely on birth or lineage but will earn respect from fellow tribe members due to their contributions to the tribe!...

So strive hard, everyone! Perhaps one day the rank you earn might surpass that of your Legion Commander, and he will have to salute you first when meeting you."

Chapter 269: The Mind of a Segestica Woman

Amidst Torrelugo's helpless cursing, everyone burst into joyous laughter, making the atmosphere even more fervent.

"If I get promoted to the rank of Baron or above, can I receive several or even a dozen households' worth of that 'fiefdom'? Wouldn't that mean I could live comfortably without doing anything, and my children could also enjoy many benefits?" Another Centurion asked.

"When you are promoted to Baron or above, the fiefdom granted to you by the tribe can indeed allow you to live comfortably, but you still need to pay your land taxes on time and in full. Leader Maximus has also said that the higher the rank, the greater the responsibility. You might be required to lead armies to expand territories, or you might be sent to manage a town or a piece of land.

If you perform poorly or make grave mistakes, you might face a demotion and punishment. Your rank can indeed be inherited by your children, but they will inherit a rank that is one level lower. If they cannot establish new achievements and make contributions to the tribe, by the time they pass the title to your grandchild, it will continue to downgrade...

Therefore, neither you nor your descendants can rest on past laurels and only seek enjoyment; otherwise, after a few generations, you'll become ordinary tribe members."

Oh, so there's both promotion and demotion... everyone silently took heed.

Another Centurion stood up: "You said that collecting taxes is to strengthen the tribe, but now you're saying that the collected taxes are given as fiefdoms to those with titles. Wouldn't that mean the tribe won't have any money?"

"Thank you for your concern for the tribe," Valgius said earnestly. "I also raised a similar question to the leader before. The leader told me that our tribe now has less than twenty thousand people and doesn't yet possess a piece of land of its own, and everyone is just ordinary tribe members. But when there are Barons, Viscounts, Earls, Dukes... the Nix Tribe will probably have tens or even hundreds of thousands of people, occupying vast lands. The rewards given to meritorious tribe members will only account for a small part of the huge tax revenue and won't deplete the tribe's strength.

The leader also told me that only when all tribe members strive to contribute to the tribe will it rapidly develop and grow strong. When the tribe develops and strengthens, it will then have the ability to grant enough title rewards to deserving tribe members — these two aspects are complementary."

The leader further said—" Valgius suddenly raised his voice, "He hopes that through your relentless efforts, the Nix Tribe can gradually grow from a newly established small tribe into a powerful one, and then become a Kingdom, or even a powerful nation like Rome or Persia, allowing each of you to enjoy the glory of being a citizen of a strong country!"

These words greatly excited the listeners, prompting someone to suddenly shout, "Long live Leader Maximus! Long live the Nix Tribe!"

This immediately sparked enthusiastic responses from others, and the cheers lasted for some time before being ruthlessly interrupted by Torrelugo.

The team officers continued to ask questions, all concerning matters that the soldiers cared about, but Anfel finally couldn't hold back and stood up, dissatisfied, and said sternly, "Why are only you men allowed to ask questions, and we women cannot?"

Only then did Torrelugo realize he'd overlooked this point. He quickly said, "Of course, you too can ask. Go ahead with your questions now!"

"Then I'll ask," Anfel said assertively. "First, I want to ask, you just said all Free Italy people are ordinary tribe members. Does that include us women? If it does, will land be allocated to us?"

"Anfel asked well! That's what we wanted to ask!" the women expressed their support.

"As it's everyone, it naturally includes you women," Valgus said seriously. "Before I came, the leader specifically emphasized that you, as part of Free Italy, made significant contributions to our successful arrival here, and thus each of you will be allocated 50 acres of good land. However, apart from you, women who join the tribe in the future generally won't be allocated land separately—"

"Great! Turns out the leader was speaking the truth!" the women cheered.

"What if we get married? How will the allocated land be counted?" Anfel glanced at Tini Bazus next to her and asked.

"As long as you marry an ordinary tribesman of the tribe, a family can be allocated 100 acres of land—"

This statement caused a stir among the crowd, especially among the single soldiers who felt greatly challenged, even if a beautiful Skodisqi or Segestica woman sat beside them, they suddenly lost interest in making conversation, as those friends in relationships with fellow rebels were about to receive twice the land they were.

Valgus noted this and continued, "In our tribe, there are over 3,000 women from Free Italy, and only these 3,000 have this special case. However, having more land isn't necessarily a good thing; 100 acres of land requires you to pay taxes corresponding to 100 acres. Farming 100 acres isn't easy for two people. If you're unable to pay the taxes for the 100 acres, you might face demotion penalties. Thus, the tribe can offer you another option—"

Valgus paused, looked at Anfel, and softly said, "After you get married, you can choose not to take those 50 acres of land and instead let your husband be promoted by one rank to become a Second-class citizen, receiving a reward of 10 acres of land... This is a special benefit from the leader for you, and you don't have to decide now. You can think it over carefully when you go back and make the decision when the time for actual land allocation comes."

Chapter 270: The Mind of a Segestica Woman_2

After Valgus finished speaking, the crowd erupted into another commotion. Someone muttered, "This isn't fair!..."

Anfel's almond-shaped eyes widened: "We're the ones being treated unfairly! We work so hard to prepare food, sew clothes, and take care of you. The effort we put in is no less than yours. These 50 acres of land are what we deserve!

But after we get married, you can continue to advance by earning merits, while we are left to work at home, care for the children, and forever remain ordinary tribe members. Is that fair?!"

"Anfel is absolutely right. We've made sacrifices, and yet some people dare to claim that it's unfair! Who said it? Come forward! We need to sort this out properly!" The women from the kitchen team began to loudly clamor, scaring the soldiers into silence.

After more than a year of battles, not only had the soldiers from humble beginnings been transformed into fierce warriors through trials of blood and fire, but these once obedient female slaves had also become resilient and independent through hardships. When truly angered, even the soldiers dared not provoke them.

Leader Maximus really foresaw this!... Valgius remembered Maximus's many instructions before the announcement of the decree and couldn't help but feel impressed. He then raised his voice and said, "Who said that women couldn't earn merits and would forever remain ordinary citizens?! The leader has made it clear that if you choose to manage the household well, take good care of the children, and give your husbands the peace of mind to earn merits on the battlefield, once he is promoted, half of his achievements will of course belong to you!

If he becomes a baron, then you are a baroness. If he becomes an earl, you are a countess. You will equally earn the respect of the other tribe members! If you don't wish to stay at home and want to contribute to the tribe, you can follow the example of Acronis and Karina; as long as you pass the Civil Affairs Department's examinations and serve as an official, you too can rise in rank with exceptional performance!

Additionally, if you possess special talent and invent something beneficial to the tribe or propose suggestions advantageous to the tribe, your contributions will likewise be rewarded with rank advancements based on the significance of your contributions..."

The women became thrilled upon hearing this.

Anfel, however, asked, "What if I become a viscount in the future, and my husband is a baron? How will the tribe reward our family? Will our child inherit my title or my husband's?"

The crowd burst into laughter.

Valgius chuckled and said, "Anfel, you're thinking way too far ahead!"

Lufus couldn't help but pat his slightly embarrassed subordinate on the shoulder. "Tini Bazus, I feel a bit sorry for you."

While Valgius had been responding skillfully up until this point, he was momentarily at a loss on how to answer her question. After thinking for some time, he finally replied, "Uh... the leader and the chief officers have not yet discussed this matter, but I believe that when situations like the one you mentioned arise, the tribe will certainly have established relevant decrees to address it."

Anfel was finally satisfied and sat down.

But the questions continued, and the enthusiasm of the crowd grew even stronger...

Pusilola, the Segestica woman mentioned earlier by Anfel, sat quietly at a distance. Like the other Segestica women present, she appeared out of place amidst the lively rest area.

She sat silently and observed.

Valgius first delivered the decree in Latin, then repeated it in Illyrian to accommodate the Skodisqi women in attendance, allowing Pusilola to understand.

Although the subsequent questions and answers were conducted in Latin, which she couldn't understand, she could see the excitement and joy on the faces of the crowd, especially when the women laughed and cheered. Their expressions filled her with envy.

Pusilola should have hated these people, for it was they who killed her husband, destroyed her happiness, and made her a captive... yet she could only bury her hatred deep within her heart because...

She gently touched her abdomen. These past few days, the smell of blood made her nauseous, and she knew she was pregnant, though she hadn't dared to tell anyone. Even though these enemies treated her better than the Segestica people treated Skodisqi slaves—much better than how Skodisqi people had treated her in her youth when she was enslaved—she couldn't take any risks.

She had once placed her hopes on Great Chief Andres leading his army to defeat the enemy and safely rescue them, but the chief suffered a crushing defeat, leaving even more of her tribesmen captured...

Now, she no longer dared to harbour much hope of returning to her tribe. Gazing at the elated enemies before her and recalling the decrees just announced, she couldn't help but worry for her tribe.

At the same time, a thought suddenly surfaced in her mind: Perhaps I should quickly find an enemy to marry and ensure the safety of my child...

.....

That evening, the declaration of the new decrees extended beyond the Second Legion and took place throughout the temporary camp.

In the Supply Camp, Capito personally announced the new regulations, focusing on how craftsmen could advance their tribal rank.

"...The Twenty Peerage System clearly benefits soldiers the most. After all, we need to settle in this unfamiliar land, surrounded by powerful enemies threatening our safety. Soldiers must fight them valiantly to secure more land, risking their lives in the process, so it's only fair that they receive greater rewards.

But this doesn't mean that you have no opportunities for better promotion. In fact, if you work hard enough, you might ascend even faster than the soldiers.

So, how can you achieve quicker promotions? I asked Leader Maximus, and he shared his insights with me. Now, I'll share them with you! As craftsmen—blacksmiths, carpenters, stone masons, bricklayers, charcoal makers—you should start with the skills you already possess.

The first method is invention. For example, if a blacksmith invents a weapon that can deal more damage to enemies, or a carpenter invents an agricultural tool that helps tribesmen cultivate land more efficiently, or a stone mason develops a type of stone that makes buildings sturdier...

The tribe will assess the importance of your invention to the people and the tribe, and reward you accordingly. There's even a chance your rank could be elevated by two or three levels in one go.

The second method is improvement. For instance, enhancing the process of iron smelting to produce higher-quality pig iron, or improving construction methods to make buildings better suited to this environment while being built faster... Once again, the tribe will reward you based on the significance of your improvements.

The third method is actively participating in tribal tasks. You've all seen that we've continually defeated the Segestica people, and we'll soon move eastward to establish settlements. At that time, we'll need to build roads, bridges, docks, houses, temples, statues—even palaces. If the construction is completed ahead of schedule and meets the satisfaction of the leader and the people, then the craftsmen who excel in their performance are highly likely to be promoted.

Additionally, if the tribe urgently needs a batch of armor to equip soldiers and the blacksmiths produce it punctually and in sufficient quantity, the outstanding performers could also achieve promotion..."

Capito spoke earnestly, and the audience listened with excitement.

Sistos not only focused intently but also occasionally clenched his fists and tapped them against his thigh, mimicking the act of forging iron.

"So? Do you believe me now when I say Free Italy will allocate land to every one of us—including you?" Kadesos's voice whispered nearby.