

Perish 311

Chapter 311: Food Supply and Education

"Hmm." Maximus nodded approvingly: "Yulitimos, I know as well, is indeed a very capable carpenter! Does anyone have any other recommendations?"

No one else responded,

After all, Volenus had served as the administrative officer of the rebel army and had registered most of the people who joined the team, evaluating their capabilities. Capito had served as the head of the Supply Camp and managed a large team of engineers and craftsmen. It could be said that these two had most of the knowledgeable and capable talents of the rebel army under their command.

Although the kitchens of Acronis and the Female Camp of Karina had many people, their cultural quality was much lower. The army did have a few suitable candidates, but they were all senior officers, whom Flanitnus was reluctant to part with.

Gaius now regretted: If he had worked earnestly in the rebel army before, he could have discovered some talents, recommended them to the leader, gained favor, and would have been more beneficial for his future development in the tribe.

Maximus waited for a while, seeing that indeed no one else had any recommendations, he said: "If we let Yulitimos be the City Lord of Westeni, it would waste his most skilled talents. I think it's better to let him be the head of the shipbuilding workshop, lead other shipwrights, and help the tribe produce better and more ships... Hmm, so let's let Sicropus serve as the City Lord of Vestini, what does everyone think?"

Capito and Volenus agreed, and with no other objections, the appointment was decided.

With the matters concerning the development of agriculture, industry, commerce, and military of the Nix Tribe settled, Maximus slightly relaxed and asked: "Does anyone have any other suggestions?"

Gaius couldn't wait to speak loudly: "Leader, we in the Finance Department now have an important issue that concerns the survival of the whole tribe, and that is a food shortage! Originally, when Volenus

handed over the supplies to me, our current food supply was quite sufficient for the original 15,000 people in the team.

But after we captured Snowdonia and Westeni, over ten thousand joined the tribe, making the food supply somewhat tight. Fortunately, we urgently planted a lot of beans and vegetables on the lands around Snowdonia, and their growth is good. I estimated based on their maximum yield that it could barely sustain us until June of next year.

But later, five to six thousand Skodisqi slaves came from Brochi, and soon a thousand Segestica prisoners will return from the Alde Tribe, increasing the tribe's population by another fifth. And they are all strong laborers, so even if we ate all the grain we planted, it would only last until the end of February next year, and then the tribe would have nothing to eat!"

His words caused a stir in the hall, and everyone felt the tension.

Maximus seemed calm, having already understood that food security was the primary issue for the tribe. Thus, he calmly asked: "Gaius, you are the Chief Officer of the Finance Department, do you have any solutions to address the tribe's food shortage?"

"Yes!" Gaius confidently spoke loudly: "There are many deer and wild boars here, we can organize hunting teams to carry out the hunting to acquire food; I see there are many fish in the Kupa River and the Kolana River, and they are quite large, we can organize the tribesmen to carry out fishing, which can also increase our food reserves;

We have 152 sheep in our tribe, including 33 female sheep, appoint someone to carefully raise them to produce as much milk as possible to make cheese; we also have some poultry, and we can appoint someone to raise them, they eat the fish and shrimps from the river and bugs from the fields and can grow well without consuming our food and can lay eggs daily, increasing our food reserves...

While acquiring food, the tribe must also strengthen control over food, strictly monitoring daily consumption to avoid unnecessary waste. In addition to our efforts, we can also buy grain from our allies, the Aldeans. I remember we had previously requested this from them and got consent, but later we captured the Segestica people's village and acquired abundant materials, so we didn't buy grain from the Aldeans. Now it's time to resume this plan..."

Gaius spoke logically, clearly showing he had meticulously prepared, which slightly surprised Maximus: because some of his proposals went beyond what Maximus had initially thought, proving that this old fellow indeed had capabilities.

"Gaius has thought thoroughly, and if these plans can be implemented, I think our food shortage problem can be resolved!" Maximus first praised Gaius' diligence, then comforted the others, and continued: "About raising poultry and livestock, Volenus, your Agricultural Department must take responsibility.

Flanitus, have your Military Department select soldiers skilled in hunting to form teams for hunting beasts. Pigeris, go to the leader Budocaribas tomorrow to discuss grain purchasing. Controlling food consumption strictly is the responsibility of the Finance Department, and Gaius, you will take charge...

Oh, yes, about fishing, it remains the responsibility of the Agricultural Department. However, fishing is best done with nets, Capito, does your Weaving Team have the ability to weave some nets quickly..."

After every task was assigned, the worries about food among the people dissipated.

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At this moment, Kefisofon began to speak: "Leader, I have a few questions."

"Go ahead."

"Among the Scodis people who have joined our tribe, more than 60 children are over six years old, and among the Segestica prisoners, there are more than 200 children over six years old. Should our Cultivation Department also teach these children to read and do arithmetic?"

"Of course." Maximus replied without hesitation: "Doing so not only demonstrates our tribe's goodwill to the Segestica people and the Skodisqi, showing them through action that we treat all ethnicities equally. It also aims to enhance the capabilities of the next generation of our tribe and accelerate their integration into our tribe."

"I understand." Kefisofon said seriously: "There is just an urgent issue in the Cultivation Department that needs to be addressed. The teachers who originally taught the children literacy and arithmetic were few

in number, being slaves and poor people who had received specialized education from a young age. Now that the tribe has settled down, they will soon be allotted land and will be busy farming and supporting their families, leaving them no extra time to teach the children."

Maximus thoughtlessly said: "This issue is easy to solve. Those teachers in the Cultivation Department, like the artisans in the Public Works Department, will receive salaries from the tribe. Their land will be tilled by the Reserve Tribe Members, so they only need to focus on teaching the children."

After next year's autumn harvest, we will begin to charge tuition fees for the children who come to learn. The fees can be set low enough for the parents to easily afford. With such an investment, the children will work harder, the parents will be more attentive, and it will also be a supplementary revenue for the tribe."

"But even if the fees are low, some stingy parents might not want to pay for their children to learn." Kadesos reminded.

"They will pay." Maximus smiled meaningfully: "In the future, the tribe will issue a decree stating that any tribesman who is illiterate or cannot do basic arithmetic cannot serve as officers in the military, cannot become tribal officials, or serve as subordinates in various departments. We will even stipulate that to receive a rank above Knight and become tribal nobles, one must be literate and numerate. For the sake of their own children's future, do you think they will pay?"

"I think they definitely will." Kefisofon expressed admiration.

Someone in the hall was unable to sit still: "Leader, if the tribe issues this decree, then we—" The speaker was Flanitnus, who is illiterate. Not only him but several others like Karina, Acronis, and Lebilus are also illiterate.

Maximus spoke earnestly: "The reason we staged a rebellion against Rome was because of our low status and oppression. Our stomachs were not full, let alone have money for education, so it's quite normal not to be literate. Therefore, this decree that will be issued is targeted at our next generation and those tribesmen who join the tribe in the future. As for those who fought against Rome, trekked arduously from Italy, and established the Nix Tribe, there will not be stringent requirements."

However, you all are now high-ranking members of the tribe. In the future, you will manage tens of thousands of tribesmen. If you are illiterate, aren't you afraid that the tribesmen will secretly laugh at you, damaging your prestige? Moreover, if you become literate and numerate, it's not easy for your subordinates to deceive you, right?"

Flanitnus and the others were deeply moved.

Maximus seized the opportunity and said: "Kefisofon, I remember that after we left Sarabia and started our march, we stopped adult education. I think we can start it again now. Once this decree is issued, I estimate many tribesmen will want to learn.

"Leader, restarting literacy and arithmetic education for the tribesmen is not a problem. But the current issue is that we don't have enough facilities to accommodate so many students.

You see, this time our Cultivation Department received two mansions, one originally for our office and the other for teaching children. But we originally had 267 children to teach, and even if we use both mansions for teaching, the space is still insufficient.

Moreover, more than half of these children don't have parents. According to the Agricultural Department subordinates, they haven't arranged other accommodations for these parentless children, so they suggest that our Cultivation Department manage them and arrange for them to live in the mansions belonging to us—"

Kefisofon hadn't finished his complaints when Maximus's face darkened, and he looked at the Agricultural Officer: "Volenus, what is going on here?!"

Despite Maximus suppressing his anger, Vobnus noticed his irritation and became flustered, his tongue twisting uncontrollably: "Lea... Leader, the tribe... just moved in, lodging is quite tight, we... thought that the children were small, they could squeeze in a bit and get through these days... shouldn't be a problem."

"It's precisely because the children are small and not as strong as adults that crowding them together creates more problems! I've said many times before that children are our future and need careful nurturing... Have you forgotten all those words?" Maximus reprimanded, and Vobnus remained silent, head down.

Seeing him as frightened as a soaked quail, Maximus's anger dissipated considerably, and his tone softened: "I also bear some responsibility. These days, I've been too busy to care for the children. The Cultivation Department's affairs are demanding, but they also need to care for the children's daily living, which might be beyond their capability. So, these parentless children will henceforth be taken care of by the Chief's main residence. Acronis, as Chief of Internal Affairs, you must take on this responsibility."

Acronis responded happily: "Leader, rest assured, I will ensure the children eat well, sleep well, and grow healthily..."

Maximus smiled, then said: "Earlier, Kefisofon, you didn't finish speaking. Since the current space is insufficient for teaching the existing children, and with the Skodisqi and Segestica children joining soon, as well as the adult tribesmen needing education, the current space will be even less adequate... Is this what you wanted to say?"

Kefisofon nodded.

"Our tribe should build a school to facilitate the teachers in teaching children. As for how the school should be constructed, what style it should be, Kefisofon, you can discuss with Capito. However, the school's completion might take some time, but the children's learning cannot be delayed. I remember there are several noble courtyards in Westeni Village that are unoccupied, how many are there?"

"Eight," Vobnus answered.

"Then allocate five of those mansions to your Cultivation Department as a temporary school. Should that be enough?"

"It's enough." Kefisofon showed a worried expression: "But most of the teachers and the children live here in Snowdonia, and the distance between the two places is a bit far. The children would have to travel there every day to study, consuming time and energy..."

"Only about ten to twenty li." Maximus said seriously: "The Cultivation Department can organize the children for a daily march to Westeni for study, returning in formation at dusk, thereby serving as regular military training for the children."

These children have previously been unable to fill their stomachs, frequently subjected to beatings and scolding, hardly daring to hope for knowledge acquisition. Now, given this great opportunity to learn, I'm sure they understand the value of it better than anyone and don't view it as suffering."

Kefisofon was persuaded and agreed to bring the children to Westeni for learning every day.

"Since the teaching venue has been moved to Westeni, then one of the two mansions originally allocated here to the Cultivation Department will be reclaimed and temporarily handed to the Medical Department. The remaining three mansions in Westeni will also be temporarily assigned to the Medical Department for treating the injured... Horace, will this be sufficient?"

Horace was about to raise this issue, but he was pleased to see Maximus had addressed it ahead of time, so after a moment's thought, he said: "It should be enough to accommodate the current wounded, but the doctors and nurses in the Medical Camp will have to look after the wounded daily, they may not have the time—"

Chapter 313: Medical, Legal, Kitchen, and Newlyweds

"I understand," said Maximus decisively. "The medical staff at the Medical Camp and the craftsmen from the Public Works Department, as well as the teachers from the Cultivation Department, all have their lands helped to be cultivated by the Reserve Tribe Members, and the tribe also pays them a salary."

"The leader is so considerate for us medical staff!" Horace complimented, then continued, "I also have a suggestion. Each village in our tribe should have a clinic in the future, and these medical staff from the Medical Department can be stationed in these clinics to be responsible for treating the tribesmen. Patients need to pay a certain fee, and the money obtained goes to the tribe to purchase linen, herbs, instruments, and other materials needed for medical treatment..."

"Hmm, this suggestion is good," Maximus nodded and said, "but the name clinic sounds small; let's call it a hospital. Regarding building hospitals, you can discuss it with Capito. However, one thing to note is that the village where the Political Affairs Hall is located is the center of the entire tribe, and also the center of all future hospitals. Therefore, the hospital here needs to be built large, gathering doctors with high medical skills and nurses with strong caregiving abilities from the original Medical Camp to primarily treat complex illnesses and frequently exchange and learn to improve the medical level of our entire tribe.

Only doctors who study at this hospital and pass assessment, being judged as medically competent, can be dispatched to work in hospitals in other villages... Let your subordinate Ikechiu take charge of this central large hospital. All hospitals must be under the jurisdiction of your Medical Department. If there is a problem in any hospital, the tribe will first look to your Medical Department for responsibility.

In addition... hospitals can charge fees, but the price for treating tribe patients cannot be high, and for treating soldiers wounded in battle, the hospital must be free."

"Leader, you consider everything thoroughly, and the Medical Department will develop a more comprehensive plan according to these proposals and implement it as soon as possible."

Maximus nodded and asked again, "Any other suggestions?"

Having calmed down after being criticized before, Sidonius stood up and said, "Leader, the relevant decrees concerning theft, debt, fighting, harming others, rape, and adultery... previously submitted to the Political Affairs Hall and discussed and passed by everyone, our Legal Department will, according to your requirements, engrave these common decrees concerning the life of the tribesmen onto wooden boards within two days and stand them outside the main hall for the tribesmen to view and understand."

Maximus stated seriously, "I heard that Rome once engraved its City State decrees on 12 bronze pillars and stood them in the square for the public to understand. Our tribe is newly established and cannot be that luxurious. Engraving them on wooden boards can achieve the same effect.

We make decrees not because we like to punish people, but to maintain tribe order. Therefore, your Legal Department must not only engrave wooden boards and erect wooden boards, but also frequently send subordinates to those tribesmen who can't read to explain the decrees so that everyone knows the law and understands the law. In this way, those who violate the decrees will naturally decrease, the lives of the tribesmen will be more stable, and your Legal Department will be more relaxed."

"Yes, the leader is right," Sidonius responded.

Just as he sat down, Acronis stood up, "Leader, I also have a problem here. Now everyone has been allocated houses and lands, but our kitchen people are still cooking for the tribesmen. How long will this continue?"

Maximus responded calmly, "The reason I called you to today's Political Affairs Hall meeting is precisely to discuss this issue with you. Although most tribesmen have been allocated houses, they currently lack things in their homes and cannot cook by themselves, so for a period of time, your kitchen still needs to cook collectively for everyone, and they will come to collect it in batches..."

While speaking, Maximus glanced at the Agricultural Officer, and Volenus immediately interjected, "The leader discussed with me that for tribesmen to cook for themselves, they need stoves, firewood, cookware, and ingredients.

I have seen those houses, and the Segestica people's stove is the fire pit in the center of the house. Tribesmen can use it after a little cleaning, wood can be chopped in the mountains by themselves, and ingredients can be distributed daily by the tribe until next autumn's harvest... These are not problems; the only problem is the cookware.

The iron baking pans used for baking bread, apart from the dozen in your kitchen, have no extras. The large clay pots used for making soup, porridge, and stewing meat were previously collected from every household in two villages, but during transportation, some were damaged, and now there are not enough to give to each household..."

Acronis protested discontentedly, "How could you be so careless and manage to ruin such important large clay pots? When will every household have good large clay pots and baking pans?!"

Capito took the initiative to respond, "The pottery workshop making clay pots and the iron workshop making baking pans, these two workshops need four or five months to be built well and capable of making good things. But I can assure you that every tribal household will have a new set of cookware before next autumn's harvest."

Acronis turned her eyes, then said, "Since the tribe has difficulties now, our kitchen is willing to continue cooking for everyone, but they won't have time to cultivate the land—"

"Since your previous subordinates are doing things for everyone, their lands can temporarily be farmed by the Reserve Tribe Members," Maximus said.

"Will they be paid a salary?"

"Unlike those teachers, doctors, and craftsmen, this is a temporary job. After a few months, they can return home to take care of their own affairs, so the matter of paying a salary is not considered."

"What about those Reserve Tribe Members? They don't have their own houses and need long-term collective cooking from the kitchen. Will those cooking personnel be paid a salary?"

"We have considered this issue. Cooking isn't very difficult; we can select a portion of people from among the Reserve Tribe Members to learn with your subordinates. Once they are familiar with it, your subordinates can completely disengage and focus on their own affairs."

"Uh... I have no more questions," Acronis somewhat sorrowfully thinking of the team she led for more than a year soon to be disbanded, said, "It's just that we're cooking in your courtyard, causing a lot of oil smoke everywhere, it smells unpleasant, and with so many people blocking the entrance to collect food every day, it's chaotic... really will affect your sleep and work!"

Maximus smiled, "Our tribe is newly established, and everyone is making efforts, all wanting the tribe to operate normally as soon as possible. As long as it's beneficial to the tribe, I don't feel it troublesome at all; I'm rather glad that this main hall can contribute to the tribe."

"Leader, with you here, our tribe will surely prosper soon!" Acronis blurted out.

This sounded comfortable... Maximus lightly coughed twice and asked, "Does anyone else have other suggestions?"

No one spoke again.

After so long a discussion of this and that, it finally came to an end!... Maximus pondered for a while, feeling that every aspect of the tribe he prepared to discuss and mention beforehand had been addressed. Finally, he completely relaxed, and his stomach immediately growled.

"We've been discussing for so long, it's already dark outside, and everyone must be hungry, right? Acronis, is there any food left?"

"Of course, I saved it all for you!" Acronis replied immediately.

"See, you're quite a competent Chief of Internal Affairs!" Maximus's compliment made Acronis feel much better.

After dinner, everyone dispersed, leaving only Chief of Internal Affairs Acronis still in the hall, watching Maximus slumped on a wooden chair continuously belching. After hesitating for a while, she softly reminded, "Leader, Nexia is still waiting for you in the bedroom."

Oh, I'm a married man now... Maximus suddenly remembered, his heart both nervous and expectant, he stood up by the wooden table, took a few steps out, then realized he had no time to roam his residence due to the tribe's relocation today, turned back, and asked, "Where's the bedroom?"

Acronis held a torch, leading Maximus to the bedroom door.

The half-open door let out a light. Maximus gulped and gently pushed open the door.

The room contained only a large wooden bed, making it seem very spacious. On the floor beside the bed were two red candles, captured by the rebel army during their time in Italy, now almost depleted. Nexia had changed from her usual plain clothes into a colorful long dress, lying flat on the bed, her body curves more pronounced...

Maximus gulped and walked in.

Nexia, possibly having fallen asleep due to a long wait, lay motionless, the flickering candlelight illuminating her beautiful face, her moist red lips especially alluring...

Maximus couldn't help bending down, but he suddenly paused, turning to beckon to Acronis standing at the door.

Acronis grudgingly turned and left.

Maximus then continued his previous action, but just as their enticing red lips were within reach, Nexia suddenly opened her bright eyes, gazing at him passionately, and softly said, "Leader, you made me wait for so long!"

The words seemed like a complaint but were more like a confession of longing for Maximus over the past year, stirring ripples in his heart.

Before he could respond, Nexia swiftly extended her arms, wrapped them around his neck, and eagerly kissed him...

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In the main hall, Maximus regarded the young man before him, "Are you Rochemnix, the second son of Karsipengpas?"

"My father is often at sea, and the village matters are managed by my elder brother. Father said to send someone trustworthy to live long-term in your village, so he sent me. Don't be fooled by my youth; I am quite capable!" The youth puffed up his chest and emphasized loudly.

Chapter 314: Papermaking

The face before him bore a striking resemblance to that Iberian pirate captain, only without the weathered look and considerably more youthful. Maximus blinked, "Of course, I believe you, but your father brought this up a month ago. Is your settlement that far from here?"

With those words, the young man's confident demeanor quickly deflated. He dared not meet Maximus's gaze, stammering, "Actually... I set out long ago, but when I was about to reach your camp, the Pannonian Army happened to surround it, so I... I stayed at Uncle Budocaribas' settlement for a while.

After finally waiting for the Pannonians to retreat, I wanted to come find you, but Uncle Budocaribas said you had been through a long battle and had many things to deal with, so I... I waited a few more days. I didn't expect you would move here so soon, and moving would be even busier, so I..."

"Rochemnix, you are a child who is very considerate of others! What you did was right. If anything happened to you, I couldn't explain it to your father." Maximus said kindly, "Did your father tell you what you were supposed to do here?"

"My father wants me to stay with you long-term. If you have any requests for my father, I should return to the settlement immediately to inform my brother." Rochemnix, relieved of his guilt, showed a keen expression, "Don't worry, I'm fast on mountain paths. I can reach my home settlement within seven days. Just let me know if you need anything."

"Rest assured, you'll have plenty to keep you busy in the future." Maximus said with a smile, then turned around and added, "Ak Country, Rochemnix will temporarily be assigned to the Department of Secretaries. Take him to familiarize himself with the tribe's situation over the next few days."

"Yes, leader!" Akegu responded loudly, leading Rochemnix out of the hall.

Maximus fell into contemplation: Did Karsipengpas send his inexperienced youngest son here for training, or was there another motive?...

At this moment, Capito entered the hall, "Leader, you summoned me urgently. What is it?"

Maximus collected his thoughts and said, "Oh, it's like this. During the Political Affairs Hall meeting the day before yesterday, I forgot something, and you forgot it too. I suddenly remembered today, so I quickly called you over to discuss it."

"What is it?"

"Paper, writing paper! Whether for each department's office work, workshop duties, or for children's learning, having a large supply of paper will make everything much more convenient. Since we can no longer acquire papyrus, we will make our own paper."

Capito recalled the previous mentions, looking at the confident young leader, he skeptically asked, "What do we need to do to make paper?"

Maximus did not answer immediately. He glanced around, "Casius, Manas, Valles, you three step out for a moment."

The three youths obediently left the hall.

Then Maximus spoke solemnly, "According to my method, it should be possible to create paper that is much superior to papyrus, more quickly and easily. This will become the unique wealth of our tribe, so the papermaking process will be the most important secret of our Nix Tribe!

You must strictly keep this secret yourself, and ensure that the artisans selected for papermaking also keep this secret. If anyone breaches it, the tribe will impose severe punishment. Can you do it?!"

Maximus spoke with such seriousness that it placed significant pressure on Capito, but he felt excited inside: because Maximus's emphasis indicated he truly had a way to produce paper!

Capito also responded solemnly, "Leader, I understand. After I return, I'll immediately devise a set of measures to prevent the papermaking process from leaking, for your review. If this ever happens, I will accept whatever punishment the tribe decides without complaint!"

Maximus watched him for a moment and said in a deep voice, "Very well, proceed as you suggested!"

Maximus had Capito sit down before continuing, "The reason for initial precaution is because the papermaking process is relatively simple, but it's something no one thought of before..."

Capito sat upright, eagerly listening to Maximus. Being well-educated, he realized that if the leader's method succeeded, it would greatly facilitate the spread of knowledge within the tribe.

"The entire papermaking process is as follows..." Maximus searched the memories of his previous life, slowly saying, "First, gather sheets of bark, boil water to steam them, then place the steamed bark in river water to clean it, removing the hard shell and impurities on the bark surface... Then soak it in a pool filled with lime water for two or three days, take it out and wash out the lime water, cut the bark into pieces, and pound it into a pulp... Pour the pulp into a stone tank filled with clean water, stir repeatedly with a wooden stick, ensuring the pulp and water mix evenly..."

Next, we need to make wooden frames, stretch tightly woven linen on the frames, submerge the linen-covered frames in the tank, then pull them out, allowing the water to drain automatically while the pulp spreads over the frames... Next, lay a felt over the frame, press it firmly for a while to absorb the water content from the pulp and make the pulp adhere more tightly... Finally, take the frames out into the sun to dry, gently peel the pulp off the frame, and it becomes a sheet of writable paper..."

Capito listened intently, memorizing as he went. After hearing everything, he recalled it carefully and said, "Leader, could you repeat it once more? There are some parts I didn't quite remember clearly."

Maximus patiently repeated it, and once Capito indicated he understood completely, he reminded, "There are some points to note during papermaking... One is the choice of bark; there are many kinds of trees in these mountains. Which ones are suitable for papermaking and which are not, you need to explore.

My suggestion is that bark which is white, long and soft, yet durable, should be the best material for papermaking. Another point is that we'll need to add an adhesive to the pulp—"

"Ad—he—sive?" Capito felt puzzled by the unfamiliar term.

"Uh... it's like a snot-like sticky liquid. Mixing it into the pulp allows the pulp and water to remain suspended on the water surface, rather than sinking, making it easier for us to scoop with the frame. With this adhesive, the finished paper will have tighter cohesion, making it less prone to breaking..."

Uh... You can send people to the mountains to search for sap from certain grasses, flowers, shrubs, and other plants, which are relatively thick and easy to extract. This can be extracted and used as the adhesive for papermaking.

Oh, you might also ask Emmerich, the Druid familiar with the local flora and fauna. He should be able to provide the correct answer... In conclusion, what I shared are the basic steps of papermaking. To produce paper, and quality paper, will require the responsible artisans to persevere in practice and exploration! You may tell them if they succeed in producing writable paper, the tribe will promote them by one rank as a recognition for their significant contribution!"

"Leader, rest assured, with these papermaking processes and suggestions you provided, I believe the artisans will surely be able to produce paper!" Capito wasn't merely flattering. After hearing Maximus's

words, he felt that this young leader wasn't speaking casually, but was presenting very meticulous and highly feasible steps, making him very curious, "Leader, may I ask where you learned this papermaking method?"

Maximus smiled mysteriously, "If I said the Divine told me in a dream, would you believe it?"

Capito was momentarily stunned, but upon reflection, his heart was suddenly a tumultuous sea...

After more than a year of close companionship, he was quite clear about the young leader's background: an enslaved child of a Roman noble, later becoming a gladiator slave. He had never once left Campania his entire life, and in Italy, no one had yet been heard of making new paper. Rome still imported large quantities of papyrus from Egypt every year, so how could an ordinary young slave have learned papermaking technology?!

...Reflecting carefully again, Maximus's first nineteen years were no different from thousands of home-born slaves in Rome, but after following those gladiators in the revolt, he became markedly different from others. While other leaders pillaged, he focused on reorganizing the group; while other leaders hesitated at city attacks, he consistently led and captured two cities by surprise; and when other leaders were intoxicated by victory, he saw the larger picture and resolutely led the group here; not to mention the Political Affairs Hall and the Twenty Peerage System he established for the tribe...all unprecedented systems!

Is this something a newly adult slave could achieve? Perhaps he truly was favored by the Divine, instructed by the Divine?!

Capito's gaze at Maximus changed.

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"Hi, I'm Akegu, what's your name—" Just as they exited the hall, Akegu asked enthusiastically, but then paused, realizing he spoke in Latin and the other might not understand, while he hadn't learned Illyrian yet, scratching his head awkwardly.

To his surprise, the youth replied in slightly awkward Latin, "Hello, Akegu, my name is Rochemnix."

Seeing Akegu's look of surprise, he explained with a hint of pride, "My mother is Latin, so I can speak Latin. Otherwise, my father wouldn't have sent me here."

Chapter 315: Nix Tribe Observations (1)

"That's great! It'll be much easier for me to take you along now!" Akegu said joyfully, then couldn't help but ask out of curiosity, "Your father is an Illyrian, how did he end up marrying a Latin woman?"

Rochemnix didn't shy away from the question and said candidly, "Years ago, my father hijacked the merchant ship my mother was on—"

"Ah, I'm sorry!"

"It's alright. That's just how pirate families are. Even though life in our village is a bit rough, my mother is very happy now..." Rochemnix responded earnestly before asking curiously, "Earlier, I heard your leader say I'd be assigned to the Secretary Department. What is that?"

Akegu thought for a moment and explained, "The Secretary Department is a newly established... organization in our Nix Tribe, directly under the leader's command. The people working in it are all around our age."

Although there were unfamiliar terms, Rochemnix roughly understood and asked with interest, "What kind of work does this... Secretary Department do?"

"Helping the leader with copying documents, writing orders, delivering messages, recording meetings..."

Rochemnix was stunned upon hearing this. "But I can't read."

"Do you know how to do math?"

"Hmm... I think I know a little," Rochemnix replied uncertainly.

"Everyone in the Secretary Department can write and calculate. You might run into some trouble this way." Akegu furrowed his brow and turned to head toward the hall. "I'll go ask the leader what to do in your situation."

After waiting for a while, Akegu came out of the hall and said to Rochemnix, "The leader hopes you can take some time to study at our tribe's school. Learning to read and do math will be very helpful for your future."

"Alright, alright!" Rochemnix agreed eagerly. Although he had never attended school, he'd often heard his mother talk about the life of the Romans across the sea and had always envied the idea of education. Now that the opportunity was here, he accepted without hesitation before asking with curiosity, "What is this school?"

"It's a place where teachers specifically teach children knowledge."

"Are there many kids in that... school?"

"Yes, quite a lot—several hundred."

"Several hundred?!" Rochemnix widened his eyes in surprise. Growing up in his village, there had only been five or six children his age to play with. He couldn't imagine what it would be like to see hundreds of children together. Feeling excited, he asked eagerly, "Where is this school? Quickly, take me to see it!"

Rochemnix's straightforward agreement made Akegu breathe a sigh of relief, feeling that this mountain-born pirate boy was quite easy to get along with. More relaxed now, Akegu said, "Don't rush. Are you hungry?"

"Not hungry. Before coming here, I ate a lot at Uncle Budocaribas's place."

"The school is in another village and a bit far away. Let me first take you to confirm your living arrangements, then I'll take you there."

"Alright... um—" Rochemnix suddenly hesitated and asked, "If I go to that school to study, does that mean I won't be able to help your leader with work?"

"The leader said that since you currently can't read or do math, you wouldn't be able to do much anyway. If there's a need to send a message to your village, the leader will arrange for someone to notify you to make the trip."

"Then I can rest assured!... Hmm, is it easy to learn reading and math?"

"It depends on the person," Akegu said, somewhat proudly. "People in our Secretary Department learned fairly quickly—within less than two years, we went from being completely illiterate to being able to fluently write out the leader's orders. But some people don't pick it up as fast."

"Don't worry, I'll learn quickly too," Rochemnix said confidently.

Akegu didn't feel offended and instead thought this new companion matched his personality well. Patting Rochemnix's shoulder, he said, "Want to come meet someone?"

"Who?"

"Someone who usually manages our daily lives."

Rochemnix followed Akegu to the front courtyard of the main house. The training ground there had been transformed into an open-air kitchen. Ten or so makeshift clay stoves made from dirt and stones burned with firewood, and large pottery jars placed on them bubbled with steam. Nearby, people kept a close watch, occasionally shouting, "You can add minced meat now!"

Immediately, someone ran over with a wooden basket and tossed in some chopped and roughly smoked horse meat or pork. But almost immediately, scolding could be heard from the sidelines: "Who is shouting so loudly again?! I've said many times before, use gestures whenever possible instead of shouting. Too much noise disrupts the leader's meetings!..."

A stout, red-brown-skinned woman stood with her hands on her hips, her voice even louder than those busy around the stove.

Akegu approached her from behind and called out, "Acronis Auntie!"

The woman, named Acronis, immediately turned around, her stern face softening instantly. "Little Akegu, is there something the leader wants me to do?"

Akegu pulled Rochemnix closer and introduced him. "His name is Rochemnix. He's the son of Karsipengpas, the Alde Tribe leader, and he'll be working in our Secretary Department from now on. The leader asked you to arrange a place for him to stay, preferably with me."

Acronis carefully examined Rochemnix and spoke warmly, "You look quite like your father. Don't worry, little one, I'll take good care of you. If you have any needs, just let me know. Treat this place like your own home—don't think of yourself as an outsider."

"I will, thank you, Acronis Auntie!" Rochemnix replied politely.

"Oh, you can speak Latin!" Acronis exclaimed with a hint of surprise but didn't dwell on it. She said to Akegu, "Your room already has six people; it's quite crowded. I'll arrange for him to stay in another room."

"The leader asked me to look after him for the time being. It'd be more convenient if we stayed together. You can transfer Casius to another room. He was just in the hall; I've already talked to him."

"Alright then." Acronis nodded in agreement but didn't immediately take action. Her priority now was to prepare lunch before the tribesmen rested.

As Akegu led Rochemnix out, Acronis casually asked, "Where are you headed?"

"To Westeni. Acronis Auntie, no need to prepare lunch for us; we'll eat over there."

Rochemnix, already curious, became even more intrigued and asked in a low voice, "You eat lunch here too?"

"Of course."

"That's wonderful! In our village, we only eat in the morning and evening," Rochemnix said enviously, rubbing his belly. He had abundant energy and ran all over the mountains every day, often getting hungry before dinner, relying on wild berries and fish from the creeks to fill his stomach.

"When we were slaves before, we were lucky to eat once a day, let alone three times. Later, everyone rose up and resisted. At first, we could only afford two meals a day, but after our leader came to lead us, life got better. He always said we must eat enough to have the strength to fight enemies and the energy to learn properly...

And these days, the leader has been emphasizing that since the tribesmen are working so hard to build our territory, with such high physical exertion, we must ensure three meals a day—even if food is tight, no one should go hungry!" Akegu said proudly.

"Your leader is amazing!" Rochemnix said earnestly, recalling the scene earlier in the hall when he saw Maximus. As his father had described, the leader seemed very young—likely only a few years older than Rochemnix himself—yet somehow facing him felt even more intimidating than standing before his father.

The more he thought about it, the more embarrassed he felt. He shook his head vigorously to clear his mind and changed the topic. "Is that Acronis Auntie responsible for cooking for the whole tribe?"

"Yes, she used to be the kitchen manager for our group, preparing all our meals. She earned quite a reputation in the group. After we arrived here and established our tribe, the leader appointed her as Chief of Internal Affairs—"

"What's a Chief of Internal Affairs?"

"It's similar to the housekeeper for nobles, but in our tribe, it's an official position with a wide scope of responsibilities. For example, since the Secretary Department directly reports to the leader, we live in

this courtyard, so she manages our food, clothing, housing, and supplies. She also looks after over a hundred children without parents living in this courtyard. Additionally, the Guard securing the main house sometimes has to follow her orders... So, you must listen to her and avoid upsetting her in the future."

"Don't worry, I'm not that foolish," Rochemnix replied. Then, glancing behind him, he asked curiously, "You said there are so many people living in this courtyard, but I only saw a few buildings."

"They're all behind that big house," Akegu said, pointing to the towering building in the center of the courtyard—the one used for Political Affairs Hall meetings. "There are 20 rooms back there. The leader mentioned that the previous Segestica Chief built the main house as a small camp, with servants to care for him and Pannonian soldiers he recruited from other tribes living in it... Now we have over 100 people staying here without feeling crowded. Over in that direction—"

By this time, Akegu had already walked out of the main house and stood on the road, pointing southward. He added, "Some longhouses house dozens of people. Now that's cramped! But it's all temporary. Before long, we'll build plenty of new houses to solve everyone's living problems."

Rochemnix didn't doubt Akegu's words at all, as the Snowdonia Village had already turned into a large construction site: tribesmen were tearing down wooden walls to expand the village, sawing and chopping wood to build houses and bridges, repairing homes, and hammering wooden boards in front of the main house's gate... Everyone was fully engrossed in their tasks, with workers hauling timber and materials moving briskly without a moment's pause...