

Perish 421

Chapter 421: Temporary Military Orders

The Stags remembered her because she had previously exposed the crimes of this Clan Leader: A few years ago, her youngest son was playing in the mountains and accidentally disturbed a beehive. The bees swarmed out and mistakenly stung the clan leader's sheep grazing nearby. The relative of the clan leader, who was responsible for herding the sheep, was so angry that he kicked the child a few times. The child fell to the ground, unconscious, and was trampled to death by the frenzied sheep.

After the incident, the clan leader made a ruling: his relative was innocent, and it was the child's own mischief that led to his death. Moreover, his family lost a few sheep in the process, so he refused to offer any compensation.

The woman's husband was not convinced and brought the case to the tribal meeting. However, the leader and all the Clan Leaders upheld the original judgment. Her husband even intended to go to the Main Camp to appeal to the Great Chief, but he was threatened by the Clan Leader: If he continued to cause trouble, he would have to pay more grain each year, and the hard work and taxing tasks in the tribe and the tribe would fall on him...

Her family eventually succumbed, but the hatred buried deep in her heart. Even though, over the years, due to the war, the clan leader's relative had died in battle, and her husband had gone missing, she blamed all these misfortunes on the Clan Leader.

When she took the short sword, she was filled with fear and hesitation, but ultimately steeled herself, closed her eyes, and thrust it forward with both hands, piercing the clan leader's belly.

Watching the man struggle in the pool of blood, she covered her face and wept.

Two Clan Leaders of the tribe were publicly executed by their fellow tribesmen... This was a huge shock to the Segestica citizens who witnessed the incident.

Once, they thought the Clan Leaders were untouchable, but just now they had been trampled under their feet. They used to think that they had to swallow their anger in the face of certain matters, but now they realized they could hold sharp blades and address the injustices within their hearts...

Most of the citizens felt a sense of unprecedented relief. While leaving the assembly, they could hardly contain their surging emotions and engaged in enthusiastic conversations. Some even quietly expressed such regret: "What a pity the leader and other Clan Leaders aren't here!"

After the Segestica citizens dispersed, Nikocus approached the Stags, "Captain, how did I do just now?"

"Not bad! But you still have to keep working hard. If many citizens voluntarily join the tribe in three days, I will report to the Great Captain and ask for merit on your behalf!" Stags encouraged him.

"Thank you, Captain. I will continue to work hard!" Nikocus replied excitedly, beginning to calculate that he would probably have to visit each household to convince those still hesitating to make up their minds.

At this point, Starks gathered all the soldiers deployed around the square and said to them, "Brothers, we'll be staying here for a while. Do you all still remember the several temporary military orders issued by the legion?"

"Yes!"

"What's the first one? You, tell me." Stags pointed to one of the soldiers.

"Don't act alone in the village, not even one or two people. You must act with at least a team after getting approval from the Centurion, even if it's just for relieving yourself."

"Good." Stags pointed to another soldier, a Scodisqi New Soldier: "The second one, you say it."

"In the village, unless the residents take hostile actions, do not initiate provocation, insult, or even harm them. Instead, try to show goodwill to these residents as much as possible."

Stags looked at him, and asked in a deep voice, "Well said, can you do it?"

The soldier hesitated for a moment: "... Yes."

Stags's gaze swept over the faces of all the Scodisqi New Soldiers in the team, and he spoke earnestly, "Brothers from the Skodisqi, I know you have suffered a lot at the hands of the Segestica people, but now you are Nixes Tribesmen, and you are about to acquire much fertile land. You will have a very good life!

I know you harbor hatred for the Segestica people, but as your captain, I don't want you to make mistakes at this time and let all your previous efforts be in vain. Do you understand?!"

"Understood..."

"Too soft, I can't hear you!"

"Understood!!" the Scodisqi New Soldiers responded in unison.

"I hope you all mean what you say!" Stags vigorously nodded, then continued, "Next, the main house here will be our camp. I just checked, and the main house is quite large. There are several other houses. If we tidy them up, there should be enough space for us to live in. If there really isn't enough space, we could allocate some people to that courtyard next door. However, for safety, we should try to live together."

"Captain, although the tribal leader isn't here, his family is still living in the main house." the centurion Proconsus reminded.

"But there are only three of them (Originally, the main house accommodated more people, but due to the massive attack by the Panoni Alliance Army on Nixes with a high chance of victory, the leader took many relatives into the army to enable them to gain merit, and yesterday, soldiers from the Third Legion took away all the slaves from the main house, leaving only this few people behind), The place is too large for them. Make them move to another courtyard, and I see many courtyards around here that are quite empty. Leave this task to your small team."

"Oh, okay." Proconsus replied reluctantly.

"Casaridaoa, your small team is responsible for cooking."

"Captain, why not assign other teams?" Casaridaoa was clearly unwilling.

"Because your team has the most new soldiers, they should be able to prepare meals that satisfy everyone." Starks responded confidently.

This was also true because several Scodisqi New Soldiers were in Casaridaoa's team, who had worked as slaves for the Segestica people before, not only farming and herding but also doing a lot of housework. Among them, two even worked part-time as cooks for their former masters.

Stags was quite familiar with the situation in his team, and of course, there was another reason he hadn't mentioned: Keeping the team with the most Scodisqi New Soldiers busy with cooking in the house minimized their wandering in the village, significantly reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

"Okay... okay." Casaridaoa reluctantly complied with the order.

"The rest of the team, come with me to familiarize ourselves with the village and the surrounding roads and terrain for better patrolling and intercepting any villagers trying to escape."

"Yes!!"

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In the square, Siris acted as an observer, neither protesting nor cooperating with the Nik Soldiers in exposing any crimes of his clan leader.

But when he returned home, he embraced his son and spun around like a windmill.

"Dad, Dad, put me down!" the child protested loudly.

Siris didn't listen, laughing heartily instead.

His wife stood by the door, watching without stepping forward to stop him. After marriage, she had never seen her husband so happy; she somewhat understood the reason: Their clan leader Icarus was dead!

Years ago, when Siris fled back to the tribe from Savatoir, Clan Leader Icarus refused to accept him, claiming that Siris helped the Skodisqi people suppress his fellow tribesmen, thus marking him a traitor to the tribe, even threatening to arrest and try him!

Siris had no choice but to join the rebellion led by the Great Chief directly. To prove himself, he fought bravely in every battle. After the war, the Great Chief initially intended to have him join his tribe, but Siris insisted on returning. Therefore, the Great Chief personally summoned the leader of his tribe and earnestly instructed him, "Siris is a hero of the Segestica people and should be treated well!"

This time, upon returning to the tribe, Siris was welcomed by his tribesmen, who respected him and frequently came to listen to him recount thrilling war stories whenever they had the chance.

This aroused Icarus's jealousy, leading him to suppress Siris in various ways. For instance, when the tribe was allocating land, the leader specifically suggested, "Siris should get more land as he made a significant contribution in the war."

But Icarus sophistically argued, "Siris is a hero, but as a single man, if he gets more land, it will cause dissatisfaction among the tribesmen and harm his reputation..."

His argument surprisingly won the support of many Clan Leaders, resulting in Siris receiving less land than even ordinary tribe members (During the Skodisqi rule, more than half of the land around the Segestica Tribes belonged to the Skodisqi and was farmed by the Segestica people, with the larger portion of the harvest handed over. After Segestica's independence, these lands were reclaimed, and the tribes redistributed them to their tribesmen)...

For instance, Siris refused to have Skodisqi slaves, which led to rumors in the tribe: "Siris is still leaning towards the Skodisqi people; no wonder he followed them to massacre our fellow tribesmen..." causing the tribesmen to gradually distance themselves from him...

Living in such an environment, Siris felt very uncomfortable. He had thought of "leaving the tribe to seek refuge with the Great Chief," but his strong self-esteem kept him from doing so. Therefore, he gradually became silent, became passive, no longer the brave warrior who dared to be first in everything, but rather a lazy tribesman who hid away from trouble.

Today, the shackle that had weighed on him for over ten years was finally gone. Although he remained silent in the square due to his long-standing habits, he unleashed his emotions completely upon returning home...

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" The door was knocked on.

"Someone's here, I'll get the door." his wife said.

"I'll go." Siris put down his son and strode into the courtyard door.

"Mom, Dad's bullying me! You have to teach him a lesson!" The six-year-old son pouted, almost crying.

Chapter 422: Selection

The wife gently stroked her son's head, who was her third child. The previous two had died young; in the past, she would give him anything he wanted. But at this moment, she gently said, "Don't blame your father; he's just too happy!"

Uncle Siris opened the door, and the person knocking was the disabled young man who previously questioned in the square, "Will the Nix Soldiers hand over those unwilling to join the Nix Tribe to the Aldeans as slaves?"

"Uncle Siris, I have something to ask you." The young man spoke quietly while cautiously observing the room.

"Miritus, don't worry, there's no one else in my house, come in." Siris said, stepping aside.

The young man named Miritus quickly walked in.

Siris closed the door and led him into the house: "Sit down and speak slowly."

"No, I'll just say a few words, standing is fine."

"As you wish."

"Uncle, I think what you said that day was right, and since I'm injured and not very mobile, I want... I want... I want—" The young man hesitated for a while before finally squeezing out a sentence: "I want to temporarily join the Nix Tribe..."

"Hmm." Siris nodded slightly, indicating he had heard.

The young man seemed a little anxious and quickly explained, "I don't... I don't really want to surrender to the Nix people, just want to wait until our tribal alliance drives the Nix people away, then I'll rejoin... rejoin—"

"I understand; you're just in a difficult situation." Siris's response eased the young man's tension, and he immediately thanked him, saying, "Thank you, Uncle! I'll leave now!"

"Alright."

After the yard door closed, the wife came over and softly asked, "Is that really what Miritus thinks?"

"Who knows." Siris smiled, "At least I think he didn't make the wrong choice."

"What choice should we make then?"

Siris looked at his wife, just about to answer when the door knocked again.

"Looks like we're going to have many visitors today." Siris sighed and went to open the door.

This time it was an old man knocking, a relative of the tribal leader, Kricus, with a careful and cautious expression similar to the young man before.

Once inside, he immediately changed demeanor, starting to angrily complain, "Siris, you've seen, right? These Nix people are so crafty and ruthless! The two Clan Leaders Icarus and Pias were killed by them in public, and they didn't even do it themselves, they forced the tribesmen to kill them both!

If they dare to kill the Clan Leader, wouldn't it be easier to kill us! Don't be fooled by their sweet words now, it's all lies! As soon as we left the square, they seized the main house and drove my sister and her family out. She's crying in my house right now!

We can't stay here any longer, or the Nix people will take our houses and possessions, even our lives won't be safe... Siris, lead the way, tonight we'll escape, head east to the land of the Brochi, and return later with the rescue forces of the tribal alliance to defeat these damned Nix people! Alright, I've said enough, you get ready, and I'll contact others!"

Kricus finished speaking, turned around and was about to leave.

"Hold on!" Siris called out to him with a stern expression, "You go if you want, but don't involve me!"

"You're not leaving?!" Kricus looked at him in surprise, "You are our tribe's renowned warrior, having killed so many Skodisqi people, everyone in the tribe respects you. And now, at this moment, you want to stay, do you want to... join the Nix?!"

"What about it? Can't I?" Siris replied coolly.

"Traitor!" Kricus's expression changed instantly, shouting with anger, "The leader values you so much, and yet... It seems others were right; you're just a Skodisqi brat, truly unreliable—"

"Shut up!" Siris's eyes glared fiercely, his face full of hostility as he shouted loudly, "One more word from you and I'll twist your head off, believe it or not!"

Kricus was so scared that he held his breath, not daring to move.

"The leader values me?!" Siris snorted coldly, "That bastard Icarus oppressed me so much, why did he never stop him!—Get out of here! Don't let me see you again!"

Siris watched coldly as the other stumbled out of the yard, a pair of hands embraced him from behind.

"I'm fine." Siris's expression returned to normal, softly reassuring his wife, "Looks like today our house will be quite lively. Just in case, go bring the long spear from under the bed and place it in the corner."

As Siris expected, from day to dusk, people kept visiting his home. He changed his previous approach; upon meeting, he first stated his desire to join the Nix Tribe. If the visitors agreed, they could talk more; if not, they were shown the door without further discussion. If someone refused to leave and started cursing, he would pick up the long spear and chase them away without a word...

That night, to prevent any grudges, Siris lay in bed with the long spear by his side, listening carefully for sounds outside the yard. He didn't sleep well all night.

At dawn, he finally took a short nap, then got up to have breakfast.

"Attention everyone! Those who want to join the Nix Tribe can now register at the main house! Please note, you must go as a family!..." Shouts came from outside, it was the fellow tribesman who had already joined the Nix, speaking yesterday in the square.

"It's time for us to leave." Siris said to his wife. His wife nodded.

The family of three washed up again, got dressed neatly, and opened the door.

On the road to the main house, there were already a few scattered people. They exchanged brief conversations when meeting: "Are you taking your family to the main house?"

"Yes, to the main house. What about you?"

"Me too."

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It was evident that everyone was a bit nervous, and they walked rather slowly.

But Siris had no such concerns. He led his wife and child quickly, reaching the main house in no time.

Several tribespeople were already standing at the main house entrance, and nearby were a dozen fully armed Nix Soldiers maintaining order.

"Are you here to register for the tribe?" A Nix Soldier asked in Illyrian Language.

"Yes." Siris replied.

"Are these your family members?"

"Yes."

"Stand here and wait. When it's your turn, we'll call you in."

"Alright." Siris stood with his family at the end of the line.

The tribesman in front turned around, it was Milucus: "Uncle Siris, your family is here too!"

"Ah." Siris responded.

Milucus leaned closer, whispering mysteriously, "Do you know, last night I saw several groups secretly leaving our tribe, trying to escape!"

"Is that so?"

"You know, my house is at the east end of the village. I couldn't sleep last night, and in the middle of the night, I heard cows and donkeys outside, so I got curious and got up to check. Luckily, there was moonlight last night, and from my wooden fence, I saw a group of people driving several carriages past my house. Guess who they were?!"

"Who?"

"The leader's family, and Kricus's family... about ten people."

"Did they get away?" Siris asked, seemingly nonchalant.

"The Nix people had already set an ambush at the intersection, I didn't even notice. They stopped them, scared them stiff on the ground, but the Nix people didn't kill them, they drove them away instead..." Miritus's words carried a hint of disappointment.

"The Nix people were quite merciful?" Siris was surprised.

"But the Nix people forcibly took their carriages and belongings. I think, without help on the road, they might find it hard to safely escape east." Milucus said, almost gloatingly: "Later, I saw two more groups trying to leave our tribe, they were all stopped by the Nix people, among them the family of your Clan Leader, treated just like the others..."

Siris raised an eyebrow and rarely teased, "Looks like you made the right choice."

"Of course!" Milucus was a bit proud, "If I were as foolish as them, I might have starved to death on the runaway road. In fact, those Nix soldiers noticed me last night, guess what, they allowed me to sweep up all the wheat scattered on the ground and take it home, over 10 pounds!—"

"Hey, stop chatting, it's your turn to go in!" A Nix Soldier came over, patting Milucus on the shoulder.

So, Milucus quickly led his wife into the main house's courtyard.

After a while, he came out with his wife, Siris still didn't have a chance to ask him what was happening inside before being urged by a soldier to go in.

In the center of the courtyard were three wooden tables arranged side by side, each seated by three people: a middle-aged man and two young men.

"Please... sit." The middle-aged man pointed to the wooden stool opposite the table, his tone a bit strange but his friendliness was evident.

Siris sat beside the middle wooden table as directed. A young man seated at his side picked up a thin, flexible, grayish-white cloth-like object from the table and prepared to write with an ink-dipped pen.

The young man facing him looked at him and asked in fluent Pannoni Language seriously, "Do you want to join the Nix Tribe?"

"Yes."

"Is it voluntary?"

"Voluntary."

"What's your name?"

"Siris."

Chapter 423: Registration

"Siris... Siris..." The young boy beside him murmured several times before picking up a pen to write. After finishing, he handed it to Siris.

The boy in front of him explained, "Remember, this will be your name from now on!"

"My name?"

"Yes, you are called Siris. That's how it is written," the boy explained seriously.

Siris understood. He stared at the small, magical symbols on the large piece of "cloth," feeling a bit excited, because from birth until now, no one had ever told him his name was written like this, so he tried hard to remember it.

But the boy took back the "cloth" and began to ask him in detail about his situation: age, past experiences, beliefs, family, status in the tribe, special skills...

Especially the "skills" part, the boy asked carefully and patiently explained.

Siris thought seriously: In his youth, he could serve people, but that shouldn't count as a skill. Later, he participated in many years of war and became a warrior of the tribe due to youth and luck, but obviously still couldn't compare with the few Nix Soldiers who won against the odds. After that, he spent more than a decade peacefully in the tribe...

So Siris's answer was—farming.

While one boy was asking, another boy was diligently writing based on Siris's responses. After finishing the questions, they proceeded to register his wife as a tribesman, and finally asked the couple to leave their fingerprints on the prepared register.

"You can go back," the middle-aged man said with a smile, "After some time, the tribe will send someone to bring you to the Dana Temple to pray. Once the oath is completed and the temple's imprint is stamped on this register, you will be reserve tribe members of the Nix Tribe!"

"Don't you need to ask about my child?" Siris asked, concerned, pointing to his son.

"No need," the middle-aged man replied, "Earlier, when we asked you and your wife, we already recorded your child's information. When he comes of age, we'll register him separately."

"Uh..." The boy who had asked questions before interrupted, "Your child is over six years old; you can send him to the tribe's school to study. This way, he can also write and count like us in the future."

Siris was greatly motivated. In his youth, when he served the Stag master, he had seen Druid Priests performing rituals with these magical symbols, which even the noble Skodisqi Nobles could not accomplish. Seeing the two boys writing with ease surprised him greatly.

"If my son can also do that, wouldn't his status in the Nix Tribe be like those Druid Priests?..." Siris thought incredulously and asked, "This writing... can we let our child learn it too?!"

"Now that you're basically a reserve tribe member of the Nix Tribe, your child naturally has the right to study at the tribal school. However—" the middle-aged man said kindly, "Studying at school requires a small fee every year, but it's not high. His family was also reserve tribesmen before—"

The middle-aged man pointed to the boy beside him, "They could afford it. I heard the tribe is preparing to build a school in the Main Camp here, but we need to stabilize the situation quickly. Otherwise, with unstable living conditions, would you dare let your child go to school?"

Siris paused and turned to the boy who had asked him questions earlier, "May I ask... you are also Segestica, right?"

Unexpectedly, the boy became a bit excited upon hearing this, "I am not, I am Nix! My parents were formerly Segestica, but now they are Nix tribe members! Nix is much better than Segestica!"

The middle-aged man immediately reminded, "Karsis, you forgot what I told you again, to speak politely with people, not impatiently, to avoid affecting their impression of our tribe."

"I... I'm sorry."

"It's okay, you'll get used to it after a few more tries. You're already doing well; when I started, I wasn't as good as you," the middle-aged man humbly encouraged, "We must hurry and call the next one."

"Yes." The boy named Karsis regained his spirit and shouted loudly, "Next!"

Siris saw this scene, and it was as if he saw a father guiding his child. Yet, in reality, it was an invading Segestica man and a Segestica youth interacting so harmoniously and naturally, which left him somewhat touched.

His mind was filled with thoughts, and he stood there dazedly until reminded by the middle-aged man, leading his wife and child outside.

Before they reached the courtyard gate, someone called from behind, "Please wait a moment!"

Siris instinctively turned around, seeing a Nix man in armor waving at him. He remembered this person was likely called Starks, the leader of the Nix Soldiers.

He cautiously asked, "Are you calling me?"

Starks replied in clumsy Illyrian, "Yes, I need to talk to you... Come with me to chat inside."

He hesitated slightly, then let his wife and child wait outside the courtyard, following Starks into the main house's hall.

As soon as they sat down, Starks got straight to the point, asking, "Would you be willing to serve as the temporary supervisor of this village, working for the Nix Tribe?"

When Siris heard this, he immediately felt relieved: Turns out, it wasn't to trouble him.

Then he curiously asked, "What is a temporary supervisor?"

"It's about helping us manage this village, ensuring good communication with the people here, trying to avoid unnecessary conflict between us and your tribesmen, so everyone can stably get through this special period."

"Why me?"

"Yesterday, another team of our Third Legion came to your village to rescue Skodisqi slaves. They mentioned you specifically after returning, so the Legion Commander asked me to pay attention to you. Just now, I listened to you introduce yourself: from ordinary tribe members, you have prestige in the tribe, you don't harbor much hatred towards the Skodisqi people, and you were one of the few who voluntarily joined us in this village. You're indeed the best candidate for the temporary supervisor position."

Starks sincerely persuaded, "Let me tell you honestly, I heard from our Legion Commander that although this temporary supervisor is just temporary, if you perform well in this position, Leader Maximus will surely value you, because the tribe needs capable people like you to help manage so many reserve tribe members, just like Emmerich before—"

"Emmerich?..." Siris felt the name was somewhat familiar.

"He was once a Skodisqi slave in your Segestica Tribe, renowned for his medical skills, respected among the previous batch of Skodisqi Reserve Tribes. The leader soon appointed him as the Medical Officer, and now he is the tribe's priest. If you excel, you could also be promoted to tribe official during your period as reserve tribe members, making it easier to—"

"Okay, I agree." Siris responded straightforwardly before Starks finished speaking, momentarily stunning Starks: "Are you sure you want to be the temporary supervisor?"

"I am sure!" Siris replied with determination.

In his youth, Siris risked his life, becoming a warrior of the tribe, yet due to his ordinary background, had been suppressed by the clan leader for over a decade. While he wasn't sure of the meaning of "official," he remembered Emmerich—formerly a Druid slave doctor in the Segestica Tribe, frequently

commanded by the tribe members, now a respected Nix Tribe priest. He too wanted to seize this opportunity to change his fate in the latter half of his life and provide a better future for his child.

"Good, let's settle it then!" Starks said with a thigh slap, smiling broadly, "First take your wife and child home, arrange your household affairs, and then come back here; we will start working together."

Siris walked out of the courtyard, suddenly feeling the sky much bluer today, the air fresher, taking a deep breath.

His wife met him with concern, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

"What did they tell you?"

"It's good news, let's talk about it at home." Siris said with a smile, softly to his wife, then took his son's hand and headed home.

As they passed the queue, someone called out, "Siris, are you done? How did it go?"

"It's simple. Once you're inside, sit tight, answer questions honestly, and there's nothing to worry about. They're very nice people," Siris reassured.

"Hearing you say that, I feel relieved."

"It's not just hearing my words; once you come out, you'll be Nix tribesmen, then you'll surely be at ease!"

"Right! Right! Siris, you're right!" That person nodded frequently, and others chimed in with agreement, smiles blooming on their faces.

Siris began fulfilling his duties, even before officially becoming the temporary supervisor of this village.

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While the First Legion carried out the Executive Hall's orders, stationing in West Village's nearby villages, undertaking to assimilate Segestica citizens and stabilize the local situation, Priest Emmerich also arrived at a nearby village to West Village, knocking on a remote thatched house's door.

"May I ask who is it?" a hoarse male voice asked from inside.

Emmerich listened carefully before responding, "It's me, Emmerich!"

Chapter 424: Hemijias

"Who is it?"

"Emmerich from Savatoir!"

There was no response from inside the house.

Emmerich patiently waited for a while, but still, no sound came from inside. So he knocked hard on the door, shouting, "Hemijias, open the door quickly! Has the 'Brave Hermi' of Savatoir turned into a coward now? Are you afraid that I might eat you up? Too scared to even meet me?—"

The door suddenly opened. Standing before Emmerich was a lean elder with white hair and beard. His hair and beard were long but well-groomed and soft, making him look spirited, but his expression was indifferent as he glanced at Emmerich, saying, "Speak quickly if you have something to say, then leave!"

Emmerich smiled, "Hemijias, is this how you treat an old friend you haven't seen in years who comes to visit? How did you become a druid back in the day!"

Hemijias didn't respond and reached out to close the door, but Emmerich held it open with his hand.

"The Nix people defeated Wallis and captured his village, so I joined the Nix Tribe," said Emmerich while exerting more force to keep the door from closing.

"The Nix Army captured Savatoir the day before yesterday—

"That's not called Savatoir, it's called Segestica!" Hemijias couldn't help but correct.

"Either way, it's been captured, and the Nix people will give it a new name. I entered Sabatoy at dusk yesterday, and it has changed quite a bit in the past decade.

This morning, I've been looking for you all over, asking many Segestica people in the village until someone finally told me that you neither live in the priest's house near the East Village Holy Stone nor in the house Andreas had specially built for you in the West Village for convenience, but that you secretly moved here alone, which was quite hard to find!"

Saying this, Emmerich's expression turned serious: "After asking so many people this morning, I found out that you are now quite disliked by many Segestica people! They think your divinations and blessings not only failed to bring victory to the Segestica Tribe but led to a series of failures. Some even believe that because of you, the Segestica Tribe didn't receive Divine protection, leading to its near extinction! You've even affected the other priests in the Segestica Tribe, causing them to be disliked by the people—"

"Shut up!" Hemijias finally showed a change in expression, struggling to close the door.

Emmerich increased his strength to hold the door open.

Never mind that they are similar in age, but having lived comfortably and lacked exercise, Hemijias was not as strong as Emmerich.

Emmerich continued to exert force while speaking, "It's not your fault! These Segestica people don't know that your strength lies not in rituals and divination but in presiding over judgments and mediating disputes! I still remember back when we were in the academy, every time we were tested in these

areas, you would always come first. Some apprentices resented your talents and openly called you a slave; you fought them and drove them away single-handedly, earning the nickname 'Brave Hermi'..."

"Those were the days of youth..." Hemijias's expression softened, and he sighed, "No matter how well-learned, it's useless; Segestica only needs priests for divination."

"In Segestica, you can't showcase your talents! Join the Nix, and you'll definitely be able to display your full potential!" Emmerich said solemnly.

"If you came just to say this, I'm not interested. Please leave." Hemijias's face returned to indifference; he exerted force again to close the door, but it was futile.

"Did you attend the village gathering this morning?"

"Your soldiers forced me with a short sword to go."

"Then you must have heard what they said. Don't you find those words fascinating?!"

"They might be able to fool the common tribesmen, but not me. I find that talk of 'the Nix Tribe Chief being a progeny of the Danu Goddess' utterly ridiculous!" Hemijias sneered, "Did you fabricate that? You, a druid, aren't you afraid of divine punishment!"

Emmerich confidently replied, "Ever since the Nix people arrived here, the river hasn't flooded as severely, and the winters have become much milder. Did I fabricate this?"

The population of the Segestica Tribe is five or six times that of the Nix, and yet the battle-seasoned Andreas was defeated, and the powerful Pannonian Tribe Alliance was defeated. Today, the Segestica Tribe is nearing extinction; did I fabricate all this?

This morning, you heard at the gathering about the system the Nix people use for tribesmen to gain merit and get promoted. Have you ever seen such a system in the knowledge you've acquired? It was established by the Nix leader, who also set up other systems in the tribe that I've never seen before. But I can assure you, these systems will make the Nix increasingly powerful!

But do you know that this Nix Tribe Chief is only twenty years old? If not for the blessing of the Divine, how could a young person devise tribal systems that us druids, who are proud to be wise, have never seen!"

"Only twenty?!" Hemijias was surprised.

"I didn't make this up. You can ask any Nix person, and they'll tell you the same. All Nixes revere their leader as if he were a Divine Son!" Emmerich solemnly stated, "The Danu Goddess oversees this land; the mountains, rivers, and forests are all her creations. Foreign deities couldn't possibly defeat her here. If the Nix leader wasn't her offspring, how could the Nix Tribe defeat the ever-faithful Pannonians!"

Hemijias remained silent; deep within, a voice was calling: Emmerich is right. That's why your past divinations and prayers failed; it's not your fault. How can a person contend with the favored of the Divine for their blessing!

Watching Hemijias's expression, Emmerich continued, "The Nix leader, following the Danu Goddess's divine revelation, is already building her temple. In the future, her temples will be in every single Nix village. The temple priests will not only perform divinations and blessings for the villagers but also teach them to coexist harmoniously, resolve conflicts, love the mountains, build a beautiful homeland, and spread the teachings of the Divine Canon, letting them know—"

"Divine Canon? What Divine Canon?" Hemijias suddenly interrupted.

Emmerich, with a solemn expression and a loud, reverent voice, said, "It's a book the Nix leader has tasked me to compile about the Danu God System we revere. It doesn't just narrate how this world was formed or tell stories of the Danu Goddess and other divine offspring, but it also uses the words and deeds of the Divine to admonish people on what should and shouldn't be done... In short, it's meant to let everyone know where we come from and where we're going, a true Divine Canon!"

Hemijias's eyes showed a hint of light, and he couldn't help but ask, "Is compiling the Divine Canon also a divine revelation from the Danu Goddess?"

"Of course!" Emmerich replied without hesitation, "Do you think this is something a twenty-year-old tribal leader could think of?"

Hemijias remained silent.

Emmerich further stated, "Moreover, the Nix Tribe is going to establish an Academy of Druids, recruiting talented children from the tribe, allowing them to study various skills in the academy and grasp the Druid Teachings. They will delve deeply into the Divine Canon, preparing to become qualified druids upon graduation, then get assigned to altar internships in various villages. After a few years of satisfactory performance, they can become town priests...

Hemijias, I didn't come here to repay the life you once saved but because the Nix Tribe greatly values us druids, and there's so much work to be done!"

Emmerich extended a hand, sincerely pleading, "I truly need the help of a talented druid like you!"

Hemijias didn't take the opportunity to close the door. Instead, he furrowed his brow and said, "Emmerich, we druids worship the Holy Stone and Holy Forest, perform secret rites in the oak groves, and praise nature. But have we ever publically worshipped the Danu Goddess? Can Druids who only honor the Danu Goddess still be called Druids?"

"As I said earlier, the Danu Goddess is the Mother of All Things, who birthed everything here; following the Nix leader's words, it's about acknowledging our roots. Honoring her is only appropriate! Furthermore, the Danu Goddess's revelations align with our Druid teachings: love for nature, cherishing all life, harmonious coexistence with nature... It's like changing clothes but still being the same person."

Patently, Emmerich explained, "Moreover, in the past, tribesmen, under our guidance, worshiped the Holy Stone and Holy Forest, which was a habit. Most people couldn't truly understand why they should do so because stones and trees are too different from humans. Those lacking wisdom couldn't connect. This led to the Segestica people doubting and despising you, the highest Druid of the tribe, after their repeated defeats! They never truly believed our teachings; they just followed the crowd!

The Danu Goddess not only resembles humans but is exceptionally gentle, kind, compassionate, and loving. The Nix leader himself carved her statue; when the temple is completed, I'll take you to see it. I promise you, anyone who sees her statue will willingly kneel at her feet and wholeheartedly honor her. This is something the Holy Stone and Holy Forest could never achieve, thus making our teachings truly resonate and spreading the Druid teachings among all tribesmen more easily."

Chapter 425: New Problem

Hemijias pondered for a moment, the indifference on his face disappeared, and his expression became more relaxed. He slowly said, "Emmerich, even if I take your advice and join the Nix Tribe, I am still a Segestica man, a Pannonian. Now there is an unresolvable hatred between the Nix Tribe and Panlonians. Will they allow me to continue as a Druid, or even a Priest in the Nix?"

"You don't need to worry about that at all!" Emmerich said confidently. "The Nix Leader once told me that whether it's Illyrians, Panonians, Skodisqi people, Boyi people, or Taurisci... they are all beloved children of the Danu Goddess. The killing between races causes pain to the Goddess, so these races must be united under one tribe, mutually respecting the Danu Goddess, living harmoniously under the guidance of the sole Druidism, and creating a better life together!... What a grand and wonderful plan this is. I don't think it is the idea of a tribal leader only twenty years old, but because it is an oracle of the Danu Goddess. What do you think?"

"The sole Druidism..." Hemijias' eyes sparkled as he turned and walked into the house, saying, "Come in, tell me in detail about the Divine Canon you're compiling and the Danu Goddess Temple you're about to establish."

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At dusk, in the hall of the Chief House of Segestica West Village, Maximus and the chief officers of various departments gathered to discuss the issues that arose today.

"Gentlemen, today, several villages where the First Legion has stationed reported the same issue," Maximus said. "Some family members of the Segestica citizens fought against us last year following Andres and have not returned yet. They want us to confirm whether their families are still alive. If they are, they will do their best to persuade their families to join our tribe. What do you think about this?"

"Last year, those Segestica who fought against us... If they weren't killed in battle and were captured instead, they should be slaves in the Alde Tribe mining, right?" Capito asked uncertainly.

"Exactly. Most of the captives given to the Alde Tribe became miners, and a small part became slaves of Aldean elders and nobles. That small part mainly consists of the relatives of tribal leaders and clan leaders of various Segestica tribes. The Aldeans like to vent their hatred on these people to find

satisfaction," Pigeris said with a hint of disdain, being quite familiar with the treatment of captives after several visits to the Alde Tribe.

"Last year, in our first war against the Segestica, we captured their two villages and over 4,000 warriors, along with more than 1,000 family members of Segestica warriors. They firmly refused to join our tribe and were eventually all handed over to the Aldeans.

Later, in the battle against Andres-led troops, nearly 7,000 warriors were captured. Except for a very few who were released, the remaining captives were handed over to the Aldeans. Later, the Panoni Alliance Army besieged our camp and was ultimately defeated, and this time we didn't capture many prisoners...

Then, some Segestica family members persuaded over 1,000 captives to join our tribe, and subsequently, we signed a year-long ceasefire agreement with the Segestica and released 3,000 people in exchange for food. Now, if the Segestica prisoners in the Alde Tribe are still alive, there should be over 7,000 captives." Volenus spoke eloquently, "According to the leader's requirement, I recorded a simple registration of those captives at that time. If we agree to this request, I can have subordinates return to Slodia and bring those records to identify if the family members they are looking for are among those captives."

After listening, Maximus's thoughts became much clearer, and he sincerely praised, "Well done, Volenus! Your meticulous work has saved us a lot of time and effort, worthy of everyone learning from!"

"I... I merely did as the leader instructed," Volenus responded humbly.

Gaius felt his face flush, quickly stating, "Leader, I think we should agree to their request. After all, we have previously allowed Segestica family members to persuade their family members captured in this war. Of course, we should treat the family members of previously captured warriors fairly; otherwise, they will surely harbor dissatisfaction, affecting our persuasion of all Segestica citizens.

Besides, judging from the situation in recent days, the Segestica Tribe now has more women than men. We need more young men to cultivate this vast fertile land and more young men to strengthen our army.

Moreover, these captives endured a year of hardship in the Alde Tribe. After regaining freedom, they should be more willing to submit to us than their compatriots."

Maximus pondered after hearing this.

"I also think we should agree to their request," Capito chimed in, reminding, "But if we do so, the captives in the Alde Tribe might all want to join our tribe. Firstly, will the Aldeans agree? Secondly, where do we get the iron ore we need without them mining it?"

"I think this problem is easy to solve," Quintus said. "In this war, didn't we capture more than 10,000 warrior captives? The number of Segestica warriors is less than half; the other Pannonia tribe captives can't surrender to us now. Why not hand them over to the Aldeans to replace the previous batch of captives?"

The newly exchanged captives are young and strong without injuries or illnesses, and the Aldeans are certainly willing. Meanwhile, we can significantly reduce food consumption because these last year's Segestica captives can return to their homes and consume their food. Isn't this a win-win situation?"

"But if we do this, the tribe won't have enough labor. Next comes road building, bridge building, and new village construction... and other essential public facilities the tribe needs people, strong laborers!" Capito reminded loudly again.

"I believe that our top priority is to quickly occupy the territory of the Segestica Tribe, conquer the Segestica citizens, and stabilize the order here. Therefore, I think agreeing to the Segestica citizen's request is necessary, and exchanging the newly captured captives for the previous ones is also necessary. This way, our anticipated food shortage problem can be significantly alleviated..."

Senaluss said loudly, doing his best to present himself: "But if we retain so many captives, we will not only face the problem of food shortage but also spend more manpower managing them. Until next autumn's harvest, all members of our tribe will live very hard and tense lives because if a strong enemy attacks or some significant accident occurs, the tribe will be in big trouble!"

Capito, the leader once said, 'A snake shouldn't dream of swallowing an elephant in one bite.' We can't be too eager! The roads can be built slowly, at least the current ones are still usable. The bridge connecting the East and West camps should be hurriedly repaired, but I think with your Public Works Department, the skilled craftsmen of the tribe, and the many newly joined Scodisqi slaves in the West Village, among whom there are also some craftsmen, the manpower to repair this bridge is more than enough, but as for other bridges, I don't think it's necessary right now.

As for building new villages, there are already enough along the banks of the Kupa River. As for this place, we already have this Main Camp. Before totally occupying this land and stabilizing order here, I think it's impossible to build new villages. What do you think, Capito?"

Capito turned his head to look elsewhere, mumbling under his breath, "What do you know?"

Gaius, instead of feeling displeased by the other's rudeness, earnestly said, "Actually, Capito, you don't need to worry about a labor shortage. Among those few thousand Segestica warriors captives we captured, some won't be willing to join the tribe, even if persuaded by relatives, and also those Segestica citizens unwilling to join our tribe. We have enough foreign auxiliaries—"

Capito sneered, "You forget we also need enough labor to help tribal officials like you and me, departmental subordinates, craftsmen working for the tribe, various workshop personnel, and market personnel in farming."

"Well... we can still, during idle farming times, summon reserve tribe members and some official tribe members to assist your Public Works Department in road building," Gaius proposed another way.

"What kind of department chief officer are you? During idle farming, the tribal decree requires military training. Furthermore, summoning official tribe members to help with road building, I don't recall such a clause being in the tribal decree," Capito scoffed.

"Didn't all of us in Snowdonia work together to build that camp!"

"At that time, we had just settled down, and everyone worked together, or there wouldn't be any place to live. But now it's different. Everyone has their own house, land, and their own things to do. Asking them to spend their time serving the tribe, I'm afraid over time, there will be discontent."

"..."

"Alright, let's end this discussion here," Maximus said. "It seems everyone agrees to grant the Segestica citizens' request, so let's settle on this matter. Tomorrow, notify the various villages where the First Legion is stationed to allow Segestica citizens to submit this application. However, they must wait until

we bring back those captives initially left in the Alde Tribe before they can visit their relatives and persuade them. Otherwise, they can only be foreign auxiliaries of the tribe."