

Perish 466

Chapter 466: Consolidate New Territory

Previously, some of the Segestica refugees fled to the Brochi Territory, while others remained in the Gonami Lake Region. Although the various tribes around the lake, out of regard for their fellow countrymen, were willing to offer some relief, they were not affluent. Consequently, food rations were scarce, causing these refugees to unconsciously disperse around the various tribes.

Glicus exploited the scattered distribution of the refugees by having his subordinates disguise themselves and infiltrate each of these refugee settlements. After gathering intelligence, they merely needed to pass the information to the nearest settlement. The subordinate stationed there would receive the intelligence and continue passing it to the next settlement... in such a methodical manner, the information was passed northward, eventually reaching the personnel stationed at the Nix Camp through settlements near the Yiborus Tribe...

Because the refugees in these settlements were already quite mobile, Glicus's subordinates only needed to travel to nearby settlements, never exceeding two miles in distance. This approach was very prudent and safe, unlikely to arouse suspicion from the enemy.

This method of information transmission conceived by Glicus made Quintus realize that this subordinate of his was not only diligent but also resourceful, making every effort to minimize the risks to their subordinates. This was what he admired most.

"Quintus, don't just speak well of your subordinate, don't forget to record merits for your men!" Maximus rarely saw Quintus in this manner and couldn't help but tease.

"Leader, recording merits is Flanitnus's responsibility." Quintus's face quickly returned to calmness, reminding in a cold voice.

Maximus forced a laugh and continued, "After today's battle, the surprise attacks by the southern enemies completely failed, and their army was almost annihilated. Moreover, the leader of the Segestica exiled army, Pulikas, was beheaded by Hagux, and the most influential leader in the Gonami Lake Region, Iberus, was also injured and captured..."

Although today's battle wasn't large, its significance was great. I believe that after suffering this blow, the southern enemies will find it difficult to organize an army to harass our villages for a while. Our tribesmen can safely cultivate the land. However, we can't lower our guard! Glicus, your Military Intelligence Bureau must keep an eye on the Gonami Lake Region and Brochi, and report immediately if anything unusual is discovered!"

"Yes!"

"Also, tell those subordinates hidden within enemy territories to be cautious and protect themselves well! Have the tribes distributed the houses and fields to them?"

"They were already distributed."

"That's good! Tell them to continue earning merits for the tribe. When they return, I will personally promote and reward them!"

"Yes, Leader! I believe that once they know what you've said, they will work even harder!" Glicus responded loudly with excitement.

Maximus nodded.

Encouraged by the praise, Glicus gathered the courage to softly ask, "Leader, now that the fleet in the Gonami Lake has been heavily damaged... should we take the opportunity to send the army south to occupy the Gonami Lake Region and intimidate the Brochi people?"

"There is no need for that at the moment." Maximus, looking at this Pannonian from Mazi, roughly guessed why he was asking and replied in a gentle tone, "If you have already had a hearty dinner and your stomach is full, would you eat again if more food was brought to you then?"

"No, I wouldn't." Glicus answered truthfully.

"The tribe's situation is just like that now."

Maximus patiently explained, "We conquered the core region of Segestica. Although there are many Scodisqi slaves and Segestica citizens joining the tribe, they haven't been completely won over. If war breaks out, it is uncertain if they will fight for the tribe;

We acquired so much land, and these lands have been distributed to both new and old tribesmen, yet they haven't yielded any benefits in these recent days, making the tribe's food supply quite tight;

We defeated Segestica, but this also attracted more enemies, with Brochi, Mazi, Desitia all eyeing our new territories. Although they don't currently have the capacity to launch an attack on us, should instability arise in our land, they won't hesitate to take action...

Therefore, what we need most is to digest the piece of Segestica Territory we've swallowed now, just like how we often defeated Segestica's armies before and once rendered them defenseless but didn't lead our army into Segestica's territory. Instead, we signed a ceasefire agreement with the Segestica and lived peacefully along the Kupa River for a year, acquiring more soldiers and resources, enabling us to defeat the large armies assembled by the Pannonian Tribe Alliance.

Now, as we have more land and tribesmen, with stable development for another one or two years, what will Gonami Lake count for? We could even defeat both Brochi and Mazi entirely! ...

Glicus, sincerely convinced, said, "Leader, I understand. I will patiently wait."

Maximus patted him on the shoulder and continued, "Your Military Intelligence Bureau should not only monitor the south but also keep a close watch on the north. A few days ago, I had a Scodisqi tribesman who once dealt with the Yabod people infiltrate the northern mountains and inform the Yabod people that 'the Segestica Tribe has suffered a great defeat and much of its territory has been occupied'. However, as reported by your Military Intelligence Bureau yesterday, although there were occasional small skirmishes on the northern Segestica Territory border, there was no sign of the Yabod people gathering massively or launching an invasion. What do you think is the reason?"

"Leader, after our tribe occupied this area, most of the Segestica people unwilling to join us fled south, but a few chose to flee north because the northern Segestica Territory is very close.

The northern Segestica tribes treat these refugees the same way as those in the Gonami Lake Region, so my subordinates found it easy to infiltrate them. These messages, passed back by responsible individuals, should be accurate."

Although Glicus appeared confident, he was somewhat apprehensive at heart. After pondering, he further explained, "I lived in the Segestica Tribe for several years and heard some things about the Yabod people. They reside in the Northwest Mountains, are few in number, their tribes are scattered, and they lack arable land, so they mainly subsist on hunting and plundering.

Previously, they invaded Segestica Territory mainly in autumn because they could seize a lot of grain during the harvest. A few years ago, they fought with the army led by Andres and suffered many deaths, and they probably haven't fully recovered yet. To retaliate against the Segestica, they would probably need to gather warriors from all the Yabod tribes.

But it's winter now, and the mountains are covered with snow, making passage very difficult. When the snow melts in spring, they will be more capable of military mobilization to attack the northern Segestica tribes..."

"Hmm, makes sense..." Maximus mused, "Spring... with another one or two months, our new territory will be more stable, and launching an expedition then would be more assured... Moreover, by then, Ophelia's Iron Workshop should be nearly complete, and contacting the Noric for the purchase of iron ore would not delay matters too much..."

"Leader, how should we handle Iberus, the captured leader of the Gonami Lake Tribe?" Flanitnus's words interrupted Maximus's contemplation.

Traditionally, the Nix handled captured Pannonian leaders and nobles by either solving them with a single stroke or sending them to the Alde for mining. However, after pondering, Maximus seriously stated, "This Iberus is said to hold considerable influence in the Gonami Lake Region. Since he is seriously injured, let the Third Legion escort him over, and let the hospital treat him well. If he can recover, perhaps we can use him to make the Segestica people in Gonami Lake more compliant, causing fewer troubles for us."

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The meticulously planned military operations by Bricks to harass the Segestica core territory controlled by the Nix people were quickly extinguished without causing much of a ripple within the Nix Tribe. Most of the Nix tribesmen were unaware of these events, being preoccupied with arranging and repairing their new homes, and planning and attending to their new fields...

Of course, the single tribesmen among the Nix were now focused on one thing—finding their companions!

This was not only a matter of personal need but also crucial for the tribe's development.

For this reason, after the migration was completed, Maximus personally issued a decree, informing all single tribesmen in the tribe and encouraging them to actively solve the matter of marriage. Meanwhile, he instructed town administrators and village chiefs to exert all efforts to help tribesmen under their jurisdiction end their singledom, incorporating it as a performance review criterion for the Civil Affairs Department.

As a result, households with widows or marriageable women in the old territories along the Kupa River or the new territories along the Sava River found their doorsteps almost worn out, with marriage proposals coming by daily.

Moreover, the already busy Danu Temple became even busier as Emmerich, the chief priest of the temple, openly declared to the believers: In a dream, the Nix Chosen, Maximus, received a revelation from the Danu Goddess, the Earth Mother and source of all creation, who is pleased to see the Nix tribe, under her protection, thrive and prosper. Therefore, tribe couples who register their marriage at the Legal Department and then pray at the temple will receive her blessing for a harmonious marriage and a happy life!

Chapter 467: The Wrath of the Boyi People

There was news from the Dana Temple: High Priest Maximus would come to the temple in the days before spring arrived, offering prayers to the Goddess and seeking Her blessing for the newlywed couples of the tribe to ensure smooth childbirth!

As a result, the subordinates at the Legal Department responsible for marriage registrations became even busier, while countless newlyweds eagerly awaited the spring ritual presided over by Maximus.

In contrast to the celebrations across the Nix Tribe Territory, Brochi Leader Bricks was overwhelmed by a cold despair. His meticulously planned raids on the Nix people had failed miserably, with two units nearly wiped out completely, and the two leaders Pulikas and Iberus still missing, their fate unknown. This was a major blow to Bricks, as without them, it would be difficult to organize the exiled Segestica people and the tribes from the Gonami Lake Region to continue harassing the Nix people.

Bricks deeply regretted his hasty decision to launch the raids against Nix; had the two leaders remained intact, they would have been a significant help against the Nix in the future.

Simultaneously, Bricks was worried that this raid might enrage the Nix people, prompting them to retaliate against the Gonami Lake Region or even pose a direct threat to Brochi. For the next few days, he anxiously monitored the situation in the Gonami Lake Region closely, but instead of waiting for the Nix army, he was met with messengers from the tribal alliance.

It turned out that the envoys of the Boyi had arrived at the headquarters of the Pannonian Tribe Alliance, meeting with the Mazi leader Maitilis. They explicitly informed him that the Boyi leaders were very dissatisfied with the Pannonian Tribe Alliance. Since both sides had decided to unite to confront the Dacians, forming a military alliance for this purpose, they should focus their energy on this objective rather than exploiting the alliance to wage other wars.

The Boyi were indifferent to the failures faced by the Pannonians in battles against other tribes; their concern lay solely in whether the Pannonians could fulfill the treaty obligations. The Boyi were about to launch an attack against the Dacians, and if the Pannonians failed to dispatch reinforcements for the campaign, the Boyi would consider it a violation of the treaty and inevitably provide "retribution" in the future...

Evidently, the Boyi's response to the previous Pannonian envoys seeking assistance was tinged with anger, firmness, and even veiled threats.

Faced with such a critical issue concerning the survival of the Pannonian Tribe, Maitilis dared not make decisions alone and was forced to dispatch messengers to the major tribes, calling for an emergency tribal alliance meeting.

Unlike previous tribal alliance meetings, only six Great Chiefs attended this time. The Segestica Great Chief had perished in battle, with no successor yet appointed. Originally, Pulikas or Iberus could have served as temporary representatives, but the two of them had disappeared after the Nix raids and were

still missing. Given the current state of the Segestica Tribe, there was no suitable representative available for the meeting, and the plan had to be abandoned.

When the six Great Chiefs sat in the tribal alliance meeting hall and saw the empty chair, they couldn't help but feel a profound sense of grief.

Once the meeting began, intense debates erupted over whether to deploy troops to participate in the Boyi's war against the Dacians.

Bricks firmly opposed sending troops, arguing that the alliance had suffered heavy losses in the war against Nix. In the short term, they were incapable of deploying troops for another campaign. Moreover, the Dacians posed a lesser threat to the Pannonian Alliance, while Nix had become the greatest threat. If the alliance withdrew warriors from the tribes, the Nix people entrenched in the Segestica Territory could hypothetically launch an attack; who would be left to defend it?

Usually mindful of the greater good, Maitilis also opposed sending troops this time. His reasoning was that Mazi had suffered significant losses in the conflict against Nix, and although separated by mountains and swamps, Mazi's proximity to Segestica Territory occupied by the Nix people made it similarly threatened.

Dessitiatae Great Chief Temagis adopted an ambiguous position.

On the one hand, Dessitiatae had suffered heavy losses in the war with Nix, and last year's battle in the temporary encampment was similarly devastating, resulting in Temagis retreating alone to the Main Camp. He faced unanimous criticism from tribal elders and dissatisfaction among tribesmen. The prospect of conscripting tribesmen for another campaign was undoubtedly challenging.

On the other hand, while Nix posed a threat to Dessitiatae, the Boyi were a more severe one. Dessitiatae's fertile lands north of the Delaware River fully bordered the Boyi. If the alliance were to break apart, and war broke out again between the Boyi and Dessitiatae, the current strength of Dessitiatae would prove entirely inadequate.

Dimikas and Pagiras, two Great Chiefs, faced similar dilemmas. Their northern territories bordered the Boyi. The veiled threats in the Boyi envoy's words were clear, and given their weakened strength, they were reluctant to engage in conflict with the Boyi again.

Compared with Dessitiatae, Mazi, and Brochi, Dimikas and Pagiras had suffered relatively little in previous wars and did not border Segestica Territory newly occupied by the Nix. Thus, their decisions were naturally predictable.

Andiseti Great Chief Antosy enthusiastically supported sending troops to participate in the Boyi war against the Dacians.

In recent years, Andiseti had consistently failed to eliminate the remnants of Skodisqi due to Dacian support behind them. If the Boyi Alliance Army could completely defeat the Dacians this time, Andiseti's long-standing issues would be resolved.

Ultimately, this Pannonian Tribe Alliance meeting concluded with Antosy, Dimikas, and Pagiras voting in favor, Bricks and Maitilis opposing, and Temagis switching to a favorable vote at the last moment. The decision to uphold the alliance treaty with the Boyi and send troops to join the campaign was passed.

However, following the meeting, Bricks explicitly stated that, due to the severe losses of his tribe, he could hardly deploy any troops for the upcoming war.

Maitilis and Temagis also subsequently announced that their tribes were in poor condition as well and could only dispatch a small number of warriors for the campaign.

On this matter, the other Great Chiefs chose not to insist.

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In the middle and lower reaches of the Danube River lived numerous Buluo tribes and ethnic groups, the most powerful of which was Dacia.

Dacia was the name given to this group by Rome, the Mediterranean hegemon. Before that, the Greeks referred to it as Geta.

In reality, this group was a branch of the Thracians. Long ago, they had migrated en masse from Northern Greece to the lower Danube River and subsequently moved upstream, crossing the Carpathian Mountains to settle in the middle Danube plain, particularly in its eastern regions.

Over time, when the Romans began city-building, the Geta-Dacians had already become the largest ethnic group among the Northern Thrace tribes.

During the Hellenic-Persian War, the Dacians first entered the Mediterranean civilization's view. At the time, Persian King Darius led a massive army across the Hellespont, seeking to conquer all of Greece, beginning with the Thracians widely distributed across Northern Greece.

Under pressure from the powerful Persian army, numerous Thracian tribes chose to surrender. Only the Dacians resisted bravely. Although they were ultimately defeated, they won the respect of their Thracian brethren and the Greeks. The famous scholar Herodotus praised the Dacians as "the bravest and most virtuous Thracians."

After the eastern Dacians were conquered by Persia, their resistance never ceased. The Persian Emperor Darius appointed a Dacia Governor to oversee them, whose continuous suppression of rebellions inadvertently fostered several Dacian Tribal Alliances. This further led to the emergence of a specialized military commander to oversee these alliances, whom the Dacians referred to as "King" or "Persian King."

In the following centuries, these chosen kings defended their tribal alliances against external enemies while fighting amongst themselves. They once confronted Alexander the Great and battled several monarchs of the subsequent Macedonian Kingdom.

With the decline of the Macedonian Kingdom, an even more formidable enemy emerged.

The Romans were evidently more dangerous than the Macedonians. Greece had surrendered, Macedonia had surrendered, Northern Greece had surrendered, Little Asia had surrendered, Bithynia had surrendered, and unwilling Pontus was under attack... At any time, the formidable Roman Army could advance north from Northern Greece or invade Eastern Dacia by sea from the Black Sea.

Such immense external threats compelled the Eastern Dacian tribes to cease their infighting and form a more unified tribal alliance to resist foreign enemies and safeguard their territory.

Most tribes shifted their gaze to Southern Transylvania and the Orastie Mountain Region. This area had produced two exceptional Dacian leaders, Olores and Rubobostes. Under their leadership, the tribal alliances under their jurisdiction had become the strongest force in Eastern Dacia.

The tribe's current leader was named Brebiusta. Though he ascended to the position at a young age, his abilities were exemplary, and his ambitions even greater. From the day he became leader, he resolved to unify the Eastern Dacian tribes (82 BC).

Through a combination of warfare and political tactics, Brebiusta unified Eastern Dacia into a single tribal alliance within ten years, becoming the sole king. Moreover, in the year before last (72 BC), he led the alliance army to repel a Roman force that had penetrated Dobrogea (mainly Thracian auxiliary soldiers), further cementing his prestige across the middle and lower Danube River regions.

Separated by the Carpathian Mountains, the Dacian inhabited areas were divided into eastern and western parts. Initially, the two sides maintained close contact. However, over time, environmental differences led to distinct development paths. Gradually, interactions between East and West diminished, and if this trend continued, they might become like the Pannonians and Aldeans—strangers to one another—further escalating conflicts over interests.

Chapter 468: Brebiusta's Decision

However, in recent years, the situation has changed, and the connections between Eastern and Western Dacia have increased once again.

The fundamental reason is: in the past, the Western Dacian tribes, having no threats from the Persians or Macedonians, never established a tribal alliance. Each tribe lived freely on the eastern plains of the middle Danube River. But in recent decades, Celtic tribes (mainly the Boyi people) have continuously migrated from the west and northwest to the eastern plains of the middle Danube River, starting to compete with the Western Dacians for land and resources.

Conflicts occurred intermittently, and the Western Dacians gradually started to lose in this decades-long struggle. Large areas of land were taken, countless tribesmen lost their lives, and many tribes were forced to migrate east... If this continues, the Western Dacian tribes will be driven out of the middle Danube River plain by the Celts.

In such a severe situation, all the tribal leaders of Western Dacia finally reached a consensus and decided to seek aid from Brebiusta.

In fact, seeking aid from Brebiusta is relatively easy without needing to travel east along the Danube River Bank, passing through the Carpathian Mountain gorge, because Brebiusta's tribe is not located downstream of the Danube River.

The Carpathian Mountains resemble a giant reverse "6," and then at the base of this "6" is a "C"-shaped small tail. The Danube River passes through the "C" of the Carpathian Mountains, entering the Eastern Dacia Plain, and eventually flows into the Black Sea. The main camp of Brebiusta's tribe is located at the base of the "6," not far north of the Danube River gorge in the Carpathian Mountains.

Oddly enough, Brebiusta's tribe is located right between Eastern and Western Dacia. Geographically, it seems more connected to the Western Dacia region because the circle of the "6" contains vast plains with a substantial gap to the northwest, linking to the eastern plains of the middle Danube River. Logically, Brebiusta's tribe should be closer to Western Dacia, but for various reasons, Brebiusta became the king of Eastern Dacia instead.

After receiving the aid request from the Western Dacians, Brebiusta without hesitation immediately mobilized militarily within his directly governed tribe. He quickly led over 20,000 warriors to reinforce Western Dacia, helping them first fend off the Boyi people's attack in the central region and then defeat the Taolisi people in the north. He even assisted the allies of the Western Dacians, the Skodisqi people, in the south by dealing a heavy blow to the Pannonians, suddenly alleviating the crisis faced by the Western Dacians.

In the following year, the Celts on the eastern Danube plain ceased their attacks on the Dacians, as if peace suddenly descended on this land that had conflicted for decades.

A year passed, and before the new spring arrived, several leaders of Western Dacia once again collectively visited Orastie Mountain.

The slopes north of Orastie have extremely gentle gradients with few trees, and large areas of green fields. Although it was already a new year, spring had not arrived yet. However, the middle Danube River plain is a massive basin, and the area surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains is a basin within a basin, featuring a warm winter and a cool summer with a favorable climate. While ice and frost still lingered in other places, here the grass was wildly growing, and wildflowers bloomed, forming a view resembling an exquisitely vibrant vast grass carpet seen from above.

On the slope stands a village that is different from other settlements on the Great River Plain. It is built with four to five meters high wooden walls, surrounded by wide and deep ditches, numerous and varied stockades, multiple towers inside, and fully armed troops patrolling the wooden wall pathways with no negligence... This is a heavily fortified mountain fortress.

The main house of the village is a three-story building made of bricks and stones. The tribal leader Brebiusta stands on the third story balcony, gazing down at the departing Western Dacian leaders.

This leader, who enjoys enormous prestige among the Dacian people, is just over thirty years old, but he is tall and robust, with a dignified and imposing appearance. He wears red wool pants, black leather shoes, a wide gold belt, a long-sleeved gray shirt, a soft wolf fur coat, a straight tube sheepskin hat, his thick long hair tied into a big braid hanging behind him, with a beard as thick as steel needles... His hazel eyes are deep and sharp.

He is a young leader of noble birth with a fairly aggressive nature.

While he was in a trance, an elder walked up behind him, dressed much more plainly, but the multicolored feather decorated on the straight tube sheepskin hat signified his extraordinary status; he was the High Priest of Brebiusta's tribe, Deqineu. With his assistance, Brebiusta achieved his current accomplishments.

"Leader, are you planning to agree to their request and send out reinforcements once more?" Deqineu asked softly.

"Yes," Brebiusta replied firmly, "They told me that the Boyi people are not only mobilizing militarily but also reaching out to other Celtic tribes. All the tribes west of the Danube River are being instigated by the Boyi people, preparing to launch a major offensive eastward this year. This is clearly not just targeting them but also aimed at us, so this is a battle we must fight!"

"Since the Boyi people have united with other western Celtic tribes, their army will undoubtedly be large, and relying solely on our strength might not be enough to deal with it!" Deqineu reminded.

"Rest assured, High Priest, although we defeated the Boyi people last time, I am not so arrogant as to believe I can single-handedly defeat the Celtic alliance army."

Brebiusta calmly responded, "I will head east and ask the tribes there to send reinforcements, forming a strong army to confront the Celts. However, there is a bit of discord between the Eastern and Western Dacian tribes, and I worry that they might not be fully committed to sending reinforcements."

"Leader, you don't need to worry about this. This is a war between the Celts and us Dacians. Our minor internal discord cannot compare to the great war that decides the life and death of two races!"

Deqineu said solemnly, "I will accompany you east and gather the priests of each tribe to jointly proclaim the importance of this war. I believe the Dacian warriors from the east will enthusiastically join your army to fight in the west."

"Then I can rest assured," Brebiusta, having great trust in Deqineu's abilities, stated confidently, "The last fight against the Celts was just a small attempt. Since they are not satisfied and want to provoke an even greater war, this time, I will certainly defeat them thoroughly, expelling them from the east bank of the Danube River, and preventing them from coveting the Dacian land again!"

Deqineu, confident in Brebiusta's military capabilities, loudly encouraged, "Leader, the last time you took the initiative to help the Western Dacians, you won their respect. This time, when they faced adversity, the first thing they thought of was to seek your help. You have already become their reliance!

If we win this war against the Celts again, the Western Dacians will surely honor you as king. At that time, you will be the sole ruler of both Eastern and Western Dacia, fulfilling the long-cherished wish of our ancestors — the unification of the entire Dacia, a Dacian Kingdom will be born in your hands!"

Hearing these words, Brebiusta clenched his fists, gazing into the distance, his eyes burning with determination, almost as if there was a flame blazing within them.

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In Ophelia's main house, Nexia curiously gazes at two oddly shaped objects on the wooden table: one is a hollow thin wooden rod half an arm's length, with one end tightly fitted with a bowl-shaped sheep bladder; the other is a large wooden pair of tongs, with curved heads forming an elliptical hollow space when closed, and the wooden tips are wrapped in soft sheep intestine...

"What are these things?" Nexia asked curiously.

Maximus pointed at the two objects on the wooden table and said: "This is called a forceps, and this one is called a fetal aspirator."

"Forceps... fetal aspirator..." Nexia muttered these fresh terms in a low voice, and soon realized something, and asked in surprise: "Are these two items you brought related to women giving birth?!"

Maximus coughed lightly twice, striving not to show an embarrassed expression: "That's right... Recently, many pregnant women in our tribe have started giving birth, resulting in quite a number of newborns. The population of the tribe is increasing, and the tribespeople have successors, this is a good thing!

But there are also unfortunate things. Horace told me that a few women experience difficult childbirth, and even with the help of midwives, it's hard to deliver the babies, resulting in... stillbirths, or after much effort, the mother experiences massive bleeding after birth making it hard to save..."

As Maximus spoke, his tone grew heavy.

Nexia held his hand and gently comforted him: "Leader, you need not feel sad, I know these things, but regardless of time and place, giving birth is always a challenge for women. Fortunately, most go smoothly, but those few who couldn't make it... perhaps they didn't receive the blessings of the Divine... the Danu Goddess."

"No, the Danu Goddess is very concerned about this tragedy occurring in our tribe!" Maximus suddenly intensified his tone and said excitedly: "She appeared in my dream, telling me that the reason why some pregnant women have difficult deliveries is because the fetus isn't positioned correctly within the abdomen, and relying solely on their strength cannot successfully deliver the baby, needing instrumental assistance... Therefore, under Her inspiration, I had the craftsmen make these two objects..."

"These little things can really help women give birth?" Although Maximus claimed to have received a divine revelation from the Danu Goddess, Nexia, being from Greece, didn't have much faith in the Danu Goddess, resulting in some bewilderment.

Chapter 469: Solving the Fertility Problem

"Of course." Maximus said confidently as he picked up the two items and patiently began explaining.

In his previous life, Maximus discovered the forceps in the game Civilization Conquest under the options for modern medical technology. The image even noted that "the emergence of forceps marked a major advancement in the history of human childbirth."

His curiosity led him to specifically research forceps. He learned that forceps had been used in childbirth for a long time, with records in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Rome, but due to low success rates, they were not widely adopted. The development and popularity of modern forceps mainly involved the Chamberlain family.

This 16th-century French midwifery family developed a kind of perforated, curve-shaped forceps that fit the infant's head well after extensive practice, greatly improving childbirth success rates. They kept this secret and made a fortune from it, spreading it only by the 18th century.

Maximus also specifically watched an animated video introducing forceps, through which he learned about the fetal aspirator. These two small instruments, working in tandem, are powerful tools for successful modern obstetric delivery.

Maximus tried hard to recall the demonstrations in the videos from his past life, trying to demonstrate with the fetal aspirator and forceps in hand while stutteredly explaining.

It was indeed awkward for a man to explain how to use instruments to assist childbirth. Even though the only observer was his wife, Maximus still felt very uneasy. But to improve the tribe's childbirth success rate, he forced himself to finish the explanation.

Finally, he said, "...The basic usage of the forceps and fetal aspirator is like this. It may seem simple, but to successfully apply them to women's childbirth and help them successfully deliver their babies, doctors, and nurses need to constantly practice and explore a set of successful experiences in using them."

"Doctor? Why would the women in our tribe need a doctor to give birth?" Nexia asked in surprise.

Maximus was taken aback.

The truth was, indeed, for the Nix people, childbirth was a family matter. No one would deliberately take the pregnant woman to a hospital to give birth. Only when danger arose during childbirth would they seek help from a hospital, but by then it was too late.

Later, Horace learned the lesson and recruited a dozen tribal women with rich childbirth experience. After training, they became hospital midwives, dispatched to assist childbirth whenever a woman was in labor... In fact, there was indeed no specialized doctor responsible for childbirth. On one hand, the doctors in the Nix Tribe were all men, and none of them were willing to do such work, fearing gossip. Moreover, the tribespeople were unwilling to let a man help with their wives' childbirth.

"Actually, there's no need for a doctor. We can teach the nurses to use these two instruments——"
Maximus immediately corrected himself.

But before he finished speaking, Nexia interrupted: "Since the Danu Goddess gave you such an inspiration in a dream, hoping that our tribe could have doctors use Her magical tools to help pregnant women give birth smoothly, but since our hospital doesn't currently have one, why not let me seriously learn to use these two magical instruments and become a doctor specifically helping women in childbirth!"

The reason why Maximus asked the craftsmen to make the two instruments and didn't directly call for Horace, but first told Nexia, was because he thought that matters related to childbirth would be more convenient if Nexia conveyed them to the Medical Department. However, he didn't expect Nexia to make such a request.

Maximus saw Nexia leaning slightly forward, her lips pressed tightly, and her hands firmly clasped, seemingly trying to control her emotions. But her bright eyes could not hide her inner tension and anticipation. So he hesitantly reminded, "Nexia... You are no longer the nurse cleaning and bandaging the wounded, but the Deputy Officer of the Medical Department, assisting Horace in managing the medical care and improving the health level of all the tribespeople——"

"I don't want to be the deputy officer in the Medical Department anymore." Nexia interrupted him softly, earnestly pleading, "Ever since I became this deputy officer, I have had nothing to do every day. It's far less fulfilling than when I was a head nurse leading the nurses to save the wounded... Leader, I

really want to be a doctor specializing in helping pregnant women give birth, and be able to see them delivering their babies smoothly. I think I would be very happy!"

Faced with his wife's deep, desire-filled gaze, Maximus felt her determination and resolve. Suddenly, he understood why Nexia made such a request: because she could not have children herself, she wanted to help other women successfully have their own children, turning her regret into others' hope.

At that moment, Maximus's heart was fiercely gripped, then he smiled and loudly encouraged her: "Since you are determined to be a doctor that helps women deliver, then go ahead and do it! I hope that one day the children born under your hand will grow up and respectfully call you 'Nexia Mother'!"

Maximus's words gave Nexia, who was a bit uneasy, more confidence. She broke into a blossoming smile and firmly responded: "Yes, I definitely will!"

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Starting in January, the Public Works Department began to take charge of building roads on the south bank of the Kupa River.

Originally, road construction was the affair Chief of Public Works Department, Capito, was most concerned with. He had long instructed Spukala and other engineers to comprehensively plan and measure the roads to be built, and had Deputy Officer Gaius, who was specifically responsible for construction projects, summon most of the Roman veterans in the tribe to supervise and guide the foreign tribesmen. To this end, he also summoned a group of stone masons to open a quarry in the mountains not far from the old road, expanded the scale of lime kilns, and increased the output of kiln-fired concrete...

Capito organized more than ten thousand foreign auxiliary, divided them into over a dozen teams, led by Roman veterans and engineers familiar with road construction, to build sections from Snowdonia to the floating bridge east of Todleduo.

He also had carpenters build a new wooden bridge at the spot where the floating bridge on the Kupa River was dismantled, and he even convinced the administrators of the three towns Danu, Westeni, and Todleduo to mobilize the populace for some auxiliary work...

Hence, the south bank of the Kupa River turned into a vast construction site, bustling with tens of thousands of people working every day, filled with lively clamor during the day.

Even by March, during the rainy season, the enormous construction team remained busy every day. And by April, as the populace had to sow fields for farming, part of the foreign auxiliary were also dispatched to help with farm work, but the number of the construction team did not significantly decrease because another batch of new laborers joined...

All of Capito's painstaking efforts were aimed at building a road comparable to the Roman Road.

By May, the wheat seedlings in the farmland were flourishing, and looking out at the fields of lush green were like two huge emeralds set on both banks of the Kupa River. At the edges of the fields and along the paths, wildflowers and bushes began to bloom, adding more charm with their fragrance and colors.

Warm weather also made road construction easier and less exhausting. However, the people did not become slack; instead, they worked even harder. After more than four months of hard work by tens of thousands of people, the approximately twenty-five-mile-long road was close to completion.

On this day, on the newly constructed road leading from Snowdonia to Westeni, a few foremen and engineers, led by Roman veterans, after repeated inspections, publicly declared: the section of the road they were responsible for has been successfully completed!

Over a thousand laborers danced with joy, erupting into deafening cheers, and the foremen and engineers even shed tears for it.

Indeed, it wasn't easy at all! Notably, among these over a thousand laborers, most were Pannonia prisoners from last year's battle. Although they were disciplined for two months, the troublemakers were sent to Alde, and those remaining were relatively obedient, issues kept occurring during the construction, with disobedience, even laziness, quarrels, and resistance...

To resolve this, Capito and the foremen devised numerous strategies—threats, hunger, corporal punishment, even beheading to deter escapees, while also giving benefits to well-behaving prisoners, such as meat rewards, promotion to construction team leader, consideration for inclusion on the release list (as Desitia clandestinely sent an envoy to propose a ceasefire and peace with the Nix), and for those

changing their mindset and wanting to join the Nix Tribe, the promise of a place on the next foreign auxiliary to reserve tribe member transition list...

With their continuous efforts, after entering April, the large prisoner construction team was finally tamed, willing to follow instructions, work hard, and cooperate with others, which greatly improved the efficiency of road construction, enabling completion within Capito's set timeframe.

For the prisoners, the excitement and cheers were partly because they could finally end the hefty roadwork, but more because:

Initially forced by the Nix to blindly use the iron plow and other tools to loosen soil on the old road, excavate the roadbed, then layer small stones, mortar, and clay on the base, then further compact pebbles, small stones, bricks, and concrete mix; subsequently, they had to lay a layer of pure concrete without impurities, using a huge smooth wooden roller for repeated compression and compaction, and finally pave the top surface with neatly carved stone slabs and rubble... The Nix even required them to dig drainage ditches on both sides of the road and smooth paths for pedestrians...

Chapter 470: The Return of the Segestica Prisoners

The process of road construction was tedious and complex, with high demands, making the captives feel very frustrated. However, when the road appeared before them in a relatively complete form, they were stunned. When had they ever seen such a flat, wide, straight, solid, and majestic road on the Great River Plain surrounded by mountains!

For a moment, they were deeply moved: Is this really just a road for mortals and carriages?! Perhaps it is for the Divine and fairies to tread upon!

They felt proud to have personally built such a road, while their emotions were also complex, for it was the Nix Tribe who had constructed this road. They had also built real wooden bridges and huge water wheels... Things that all Pannonian Tribes simply could not achieve, yet such a tribe was the enemy of the Pannonians.

On the construction site, besides these Pannonian prisoners who were enveloped in pride, shock, and fear, there were others with similarly complex feelings. They were also Pannonian prisoners, captured in last year's several wars, all from Segestica. Later, they were sent to the Alde Tribe, where most were escorted into the mountains to mine iron.

Not until the Nix people annexed the core territory of Segestica did they, at the request of many Segestica prisoners' families who had already sought refuge with the tribe, compile dozens of pages of lists. Pigeris took these to the Alde Tribe and, with the consent of Alistacas and Karsipengpas, exchanged new captives for old ones, bringing back these more than 3,000 Segestica prisoners who had stayed with the Alde Tribe for over a year.

However, these prisoners had been abused and tormented by the Aldeans, leaving their physical condition poor. If they were allowed to directly return home and reunite with their families, it would not only fail to earn the gratitude of the Segestica citizens but might lead them to hold a grudge against the tribe. Moreover, if their families did not take good care, it could likely result in the prisoners' deaths, further inciting their anger.

In line with the principle of seeing a good deed through to the end, the tribe first kept these captives in several towns along the Kupa River, where they recuperated and familiarized themselves with life in the Nix Tribe.

Under the meticulous care of medical staff, the physical condition of many captives greatly improved after more than a month. Just at this time, some captives responsible for road construction were pulled away to help with sowing, affecting the progress of the road work. Thus, at a Political Affairs Hall meeting, Capito proposed a suggestion: temporarily delay these captives' return home, keeping them in the Kupa River area to help with road construction.

After some discussion, the proposal was approved.

Thus, these thousands of captives, who should have been going home, had to temporarily join the road construction team, starting with the simplest, least labor-intensive tasks of fetching water and mud, moving onto the most laborious task of digging sand and crushing stones, and finally to the most difficult tasks of rolling logs and piecing together stones... they were involved in all aspects of road construction, helping to complete the task for the labor-lacking road construction team.

Having experienced a shared struggle and completed this project, they too felt very excited, but compared to the original labor of the road construction team, their mood was somewhat different.

They felt a little apprehensive, unsure if the Nix people would keep their promise and allow them to return home after completing this stretch of road.

Yet none dared to proactively question the foreman. Their year-plus as slaves in the Alde Tribe had worn away their courage, making them cautious and careful.

In the next two days, the other laborers of this construction team were transferred to other unfinished road sections to work, leaving them in the collective dormitory of Snowdonia with nothing to do (this collective dormitory was originally a place for Reserve Tribe Members when the Nix Tribe was established). During this time, their food was better than before, and the town's medical staff specially gave them a detailed check-up again.

All signs indicated that their days of returning home were not far away, and the hope in everyone's heart became increasingly strong. In fact, quite a few could not sleep well for two consecutive nights due to this.

Sure enough, on the third day, they were all summoned to the town square not far from the collective dormitory, with all eyes focused on the two people at the front of the queue.

One of them was the head of the Foreign Auxiliary Civilian Management Bureau of Snowdonia, holding a roster and loudly calling names, with each call eliciting a response from someone in the queue.

After staying here for more than three months, these Segestica people, with the "help" of the management staff, gradually learned to follow commands and prohibitions. Throughout the roll call, no one made noise, let alone caused trouble.

"The 217 original Segestica prisoners from the Alde Tribe in the fourth road-building team are all here. In the past two days, we specially had the hospital perform a physical examination on them. There are basically no major illnesses; they can all walk back to Ophelia." Although the person in charge had two small round iron badges pinned to the chest of his linen shirt and the person next to him had only one, the person in charge spoke quite politely.

At the beginning of this year, Maximus, through the Political Affairs Hall, implemented some new initiatives to make the entire tribe's bureaucratic class more formal to ensure its more effective and stable operation, maintaining its authority and order in the tribe.

Defining officials' ranks and establishing salary levels was an important task among them, as well as using attire to display the difference in status, hence facilitating management.

But since the Nix Tribe had only been established for two years, there was no financial means to provide officials with specific garments, so temporarily, the need was met by pinning iron badges to their chests.

Wearing only one iron badge was the most ordinary clerk, responsible for running errands; wearing two iron badges indicated a minor official, responsible for certain affairs and managing a group of people.

Although the two had rank differences, the person in charge's attitude was amiable because the person next to him was from the Foreign Auxiliary Management Bureau of the Nix Tribe Agricultural Department, and although they were in the same department, the person was from the headquarters.

After the person in charge made a gesture of invitation, this envoy raised a sheet of paper in hand and, in the most fluent Segestica language, solemnly and loudly declared: "This is an order personally signed by Leader Maximus of the Nix Tribe. In view of your successful completion of the road construction task, you are allowed to go home—"

Before he could finish, the crowd burst into cheers.

The envoy was not annoyed but empathetic, watching the enormously excited people, and only when the square finally quieted down did he loudly continue: "Simultaneously, the period for you to become official tribe members of the Nix will be shortened by three months. Of course, you must first fulfill your promise and, after returning home, actively apply to become Reserve Tribe Members to the tribe, and swear loyalty to the Danu Goddess at the temple—not betraying the Nix Tribe, in order to continue living freely in your homeland. Otherwise, you will be forcibly sent back to the Alde Tribe and revert to a hellish life!"

These words plunged the square into a deathly silence, with some even showing painful expressions on their faces.

The envoy shouted: "Would you be so foolish?!"

"No!!" Everyone vehemently shook their heads.

"Next, I will take you back to the Sava River—your home!" The envoy continued to remind: "Throughout the journey, if you do not heed my orders, run off recklessly, or commit acts against the Nix Tribe Decree, not only will you suffer punitive actions from the tribe, but you may also be sent back to the Alde Tribe! Over these two years, you've suffered so much, and now finally see hope; would you be so foolish as to destroy it?!"

"No!!!"

"Good, I hope you can achieve this!" Said the envoy, handing the directive in his hand to the person in charge.

Once the envoy arrived, the directive was shown to the person in charge, but he still earnestly verified it, particularly the seal of the Political Affairs Hall and the prominent chief's seal at the end.

Official documents and commands of the Nix Tribe had to be stamped, which was another important move by Maximus to promote the bureaucratic reform of the Nix Tribe.

He personally carved more than a hundred hardwood seals, using simplified Chinese characters for the inscriptions, distributed them to heads of various departments, and specially had the Political Affairs Hall pass a decree—severe punishment for private engraving of seals.

Since officials could not read the words within the seals, they privately speculated, "It must be some divine text engraved by Leader Maximus under the enlightenment of the Danu Goddess," thus treasuring the seals.

Upon completing the directive verification, the person in charge accepted it, turning to hand over a pre-written document, stamped with the Snowdonia Foreign Auxiliary Civilian Management Bureau seal, to the other party, which allowed "217 prisoners to depart from the management bureau and return to their Sava River home."

This was a necessary transition procedure, and with this proof document, the envoy could smoothly lead these prisoners through the checkpoints within the Nix Tribe territory.

Starting this year, the Nix Tribe began to gradually strengthen the management of its territories. Individual tribesmen were unimpeded in moving between towns, but groups moving through the territory would be questioned by patrols and checkpoints in various towns, and for an envoy to lead such a large group, without the department-issued proof document, it was very likely they would be detained by checkpoint guards as enemies... This was also a measure in Maximus's push for formalizing tribal management.

Before joining the Nix Tribe, the envoy was illiterate. It was only after becoming a subordinate at the Foreign Auxiliary Civilian Management Bureau that he began attending a newly established school in Ophelia to study, but because the time was short, he hadn't learned much. He did not pretend to understand but first had his writings officer read the document aloud, then personally checked the document, picked out the words he understood, felt the general meaning was correct, meticulously checked the authenticity of the seal patterns, and only then folded the document carefully, placing it in the cloth bag he carried.

"Sir, may I take these people away?" The envoy asked the person in charge respectfully. Lower-ranked officials had to use honorifics towards higher-ranking officials, a requirement Maximus proposed this year, consequently making the term "sir" popular in the Nix Tribe's officialdom.