

Perish 531

Chapter 531: Nix People in Action

Due to the poor harvest and insufficient supplies, Caesar had to disperse his eight legions over a very vast area of Gaul during the winter. This would reduce transportation consumption and allow better access to food from nearby tribes.

However, this led to the Roman Army being spread thin and somewhat vulnerable.

The Gaul tribes in the Belgium region had only recently allied with Rome. Caesar did not trust them, so he not only stationed a considerable number of troops there but also interfered with the appointment of tribal leaders, causing some tribal nobles to harbor resentment.

After Caesar stationed his troops separately, they saw the opportunity to resist the Romans and secretly contacted several tribes to launch an independent revolt simultaneously.

Fifteen Roman cohorts (including the entire 14th Legion and 5 additional cohorts) stationed at Atuatuca were attacked by a large number of Gaul warriors. The forces, in cowardice, chose to retreat and were subsequently surrounded during their withdrawal. Apart from a few survivors who escaped, the fifteen cohorts were almost entirely annihilated, and both Legion Commanders, Cotta and Sabinus, were killed in battle.

This victory encouraged other Gaul tribes to attack the Roman Army stationed in their territories.

The army led by Quintus Cicero was also besieged. He was the younger brother of the former Governor Cicero and could become Legion Commander only to cement the friendly relations between his brother and Caesar.

Quintus fulfilled his family obligations, but he was not a competent military man. When leading the legion into the winter camp, he was even composing plays.

However, when attacked by the Gauls, he earnestly listened to the advice of his officers, chose not to retreat, and held the fort. He delegated authority to the officers, boosted the morale of his troops during the day, and urged the soldiers to reinforce fortifications at night. He did what a Roman Elder should do.

But more often, the soldiers persuaded him to return to his tent to rest, possibly feeling he was somewhat of a hindrance.

Ten days later, Caesar received the emergency message sent by Quintus, showing that he had not established a comprehensive intelligence system in Gaul.

He immediately realized he must act swiftly to rescue Quintus's forces; otherwise, if the Gauls achieved a second victory, the momentum of the revolt would increase.

Thus, he quickly assembled a force of over seven thousand men without delaying for a moment and marched rapidly north.

This military action was undoubtedly very risky. Caesar's forces were far inferior in number to the Gauls, and his soldiers came from two legions that had been in prolonged combat, suffering from fatigue and significant understaffing, but with courageous actions and excellent command, he ultimately rescued one encircled army after another and repelled the rebellious Gauls.

Then, the entire winter, he did not return south of the Alps to winter as in previous years but stayed in Gaul's camps, wary of any possible unrest among the Gaul tribes at any time.

At the same time, he recruited more new soldiers in the province, forming three new legions, including the previously annihilated 14th Legion. Caesar's forces expanded to ten legions.

By early spring of the next year (53 BC, the twentieth year since the establishment of the Nix Tribe), Caesar initiated retaliatory military actions against the Gaul tribes that had not submitted to him—burning Gaul houses and villages, consuming and destroying their crops and livestock, killing and enslaving them, including the elderly, women, and children.

Yes, this was the cruel scorched earth policy.

Thus, every Gaul village and house was set ablaze by the Roman Army; the cattle and sheep seized were gathered together; the wheat fields were not only consumed by Romans or livestock but also washed

away by the torrential rains common this season. And after the Roman Army left, those Gaul people hiding in the mountains and forests, for lack of food, would inevitably starve to death.

Most of that year, Caesar was in Gaul commanding his troops, without fighting any major battles, mainly just destroying.

As a result, northeastern Gaul was severely weakened, many areas turned to desolate wasteland, unlikely to recover for decades.

After military operations ended, Caesar convened another meeting of Gaul leaders, with many attendees.

At the meeting, Caesar accused the noble Aco from the Sinone Tribe of being one of the masterminds behind the revolt, publicly flogged him, and then executed him.

The other leaders were shocked, but no one dared to intercede for him.

Caesar felt satisfied with the leaders' performance, thinking that this time, his swift measures should keep the Gauls quiet for a while.

So for some time thereafter, he even had leisure to continue writing the fifth and sixth volumes of the Gallic War, attributing the annihilation of the fifteen cohorts to the mistaken command of the two Legion Commanders, also interspersing with anecdotes about Gauls and Germans, thereby reducing the offense caused to the Roman public by the scorched earth policy he described in the text.

At this point, he suddenly received news from Rome that an incident in the Eastern Province of Rome would significantly impact his subsequent political career.

In 54 BC (nineteenth year since the establishment of the Nix Tribe), after being appointed governor of Syria, Crassus spent almost more than half a year preparing for military operations.

At the end of the year, his younger son Publius led a thousand Gallian Cavalry to the east to join his father.

Afterward, the father and son commenced the long-awaited invasion of Parthia. After successfully capturing some Parthian fortresses and towns, in spring of the following year, Crassus led seven legions across the Euphrates River, seeking a decisive battle with the enemy's main forces.

Crassus was full of confidence because Lucullus and Pompey had proven in the past how easily Romans could crush Eastern armies vastly superior in strength to themselves.

Near Kale City, the Roman Army encountered ten thousand cavalry led by the young Parthian commander Sulena, and a battle of archers and cavalry against heavy infantry began.

With Sulena's more adequate preparations and the endless arrows from the cavalry, the Roman Army's morale eventually collapsed, almost being annihilated during the retreat, with Publius killed in battle and Crassus captured. The Parthians poured molten gold down his throat, causing him to die in agony.

Thus, the Triumvirate lost one of its members.

Only Crassus's Financial Officer, leading some survivors, returned to Syria and repelled Parthian raids on the province, gaining fame for himself.

His name was Gaius Cassius Longinus.

In this year, Caesar fought in Gaul, Crassus fought in Parthia, and Rome was also in turmoil.

Before the 53 BC consul election, the two candidates united and bribed the "Priority Centurion" and the presiding former consul massively. After the exposure, the public uproared, forcing the election to be postponed to summer of that year, and the Senate had to request the veteran Consul Pompey to oversee the election.

While Romans worried about their country's chaotic political situation, an inconspicuous merchant ship sailed into the port of Massilia.

The merchant ship docked, and from it disembarked the Commerce Officer Onomabatis of the Kingdom of Nix and his entourage, along with more than ten Gaul slaves.

Onomabatis's current public identity was that of a trader from the Illyria Province. Since he had visited this City State a few times before and intentionally befriended the port's bureaucrats, he and his group disembarked without much trouble and stayed at the port inn.

In the following days, he sold goods at his rented stall while dispatching people everywhere to gather information.

Later, he announced that he would sell the remaining goods to the villages outside Massilia City, thus forming a caravan to go out and trade.

Massilia had long been dependent on Rome and enjoyed its military protection, having not encountered war for a long time. The City's guards' military preparedness was slack. Even though Onomabatis's caravan had quite a few Gaul slaves, because in recent years Caesar had conquered Gaul, leading to a massive influx of Gaul slaves into the slave markets of the Northern Three Provinces, the adjacent Massilia was also affected, with every household having several cheap Gaul slaves; thus, the city's guards did not doubt and allowed them to pass easily.

The caravan headed westward, and just before reaching the City State's border in the desolate wilderness, the entire caravan stopped.

Among the slaves originally responsible for driving carriages and guarding goods, three Gaul slaves quickly approached Onomabatis.

Onomabatis looked at them not with the casual indifference a master has toward slaves but with the solemnity of a supervisor assigning tasks to subordinates. He said in a deep voice, "I can only send you this far; the rest is up to you. May the Goddess Danu bless you with success in completing the task assigned by the Great King!"

"Since the Goddess Danu has warned the Great King, She will certainly bless us to complete the task, allowing our Gaul compatriots to be saved!" one slave said with determination, and the other two nodded firmly.

"If... any of you are unfortunate enough to be caught by the Romans, do not forget the oath you swore in the temple!" Onomabatis observed them and reminded them solemnly.

"Rest assured, if we fall into the Romans' hands, we will not utter a word even if it means our destruction!" the three responded in unison, resolutely and decisively.

"Good!" Onomabatis signaled his men to give each person a bag filled with food, water, and a bedroll.

After receiving these, the three solemnly bowed to everyone in the caravan and then quickly disappeared into the forest ahead.

"Let's head back; it's time to buy some things." Onomabatis waved and said, even though he believed the lax city guards of Massilia wouldn't notice the anomaly of the caravan, but this matter was of such importance that no oversight was allowable.

Chapter 532: Vercingetorix

The three Gauls who infiltrated the mountains were indeed slaves purchased by Onomabatis in the Northern Italy Province. However, that was years ago, and later they were sent to the Nix Tribe to become reserve tribe members. This time, they were entrusted with an important mission by Leader Maximus to return to their homeland.

According to the pre-arranged plan, after crossing the Massilia border, the three parted ways, each taking their chosen route to avoid the risk of encountering Roman patrols and getting captured, which would jeopardize the mission.

Their destination was the Avelli, and one of the four, Lurios, was an Avelli.

The Avelli are located in the southern part of the entire Gaul region, not too far from the Roman province of Western Fa and Massilia. Compared to their northern kin, the Avelli, and the surrounding Gaul tribes have more frequent interactions with the Romans and even control trade routes with the Roman world.

When Caesar first took office as Governor of Gaul, the Avelli and other tribes provided him with considerable assistance.

Lurios had previously traveled to Massilia to sell goods for the Avelli Tribe and was familiar with the routes and terrain between the two places. Hence, he chose a path that was remote yet relatively easy to traverse, proceeding smoothly without much trouble.

However, along the way, he occasionally saw villages burned to ruins, corpses of his kin hanging from stakes, and the old, young, women, and children hiding in the mountains, emaciated and surviving by digging insect larvae and plant roots...

Although Caesar's scorched earth policy was mainly implemented in the coastal areas of Northwest Gaul, the Roman army used the same tactics wherever they passed, intending to intimidate all Gauls, making them more obedient and cease resistance.

The more similar scenes Lurios saw, the heavier his mood became, prompting him to quicken his pace.

After a long journey, Lurios finally arrived at the central town of the Avelli—Gergovia (near modern-day France Clermont).

In Lurios's memory, Gergovia, although the center of the Avelli, was not a large town and was not densely populated. Being accustomed to the cleanliness and prosperity of the towns in the Nix Tribe, he felt dissatisfied with Gergovia's dirtiness and crudity.

But upon seeing the town again, the dirtiness and crudity were even worse, although its population and size had grown significantly. Tents were set up everywhere outside the village, filled with people from various Gaul regions and tribes, creating an unusually noisy and lively atmosphere.

Could it be true, as prophesied by the Danu Goddess, that the Avelli were going to rebel?!... Lurios felt anxious, worried for his original tribe, but he first had to complete the mission entrusted to him by Leader Maximus.

He recalled that the person he was looking for was not here, and his visit to the central town was merely to better inquire about this person's whereabouts.

He cautiously found an Avelli vendor, using the pretense of buying things to discreetly ask a few questions.

Dressed as a Gaul and speaking with an Avelli accent, no one suspected him.

"You mean Vercingetorix is here?! In the main house of the town?!" Lurios was very surprised.

Yes, the person he was looking for was Vercingetorix.

From Maximus's past life memories, he was not familiar with the detailed process of Caesar's conquest of the entire Gaul region, but he knew about the great Gaul rebellion led by Vercingetorix, which caused great trouble for Caesar. Moreover, he knew this event happened in the penultimate year of Caesar's eight-year tenure as Governor of Gaul. Because of the urgency of stabilizing Gaul to free up forces to march on Rome, Caesar took significant military risks to suppress the rebellion.

Therefore, from the first day Caesar took office as Governor of Gaul, Maximus calculated carefully, and in his sixth year, he gathered the thousands of Gaul slaves Onomabatis had been buying over the years from the Northern Italy Province to ask: who knows Vercingetorix?

Maximus only knew the name Vercingetorix, didn't know how to write it (Gauls had no written language), and didn't know which tribe he was from, but he was certain this person must be a tribal leader (as a branch of the Celtic family, Gauls valued lineage greatly, and a common tribesman couldn't command so many tribal armies) and relatively young, because according to historical records, Caesar had cultivated him.

The name Vercingetorix is rare among Gaul tribes, and coupled with the rarity of young Gaul leaders, the scope became minimal... Among thousands of slaves from various Gaul tribes, three quickly claimed they knew this person.

Upon further questioning, Maximus found that all three were referring to the same person—Vercingetorix, the young leader of the Avelli Tribe.

Overjoyed, Maximus had a detailed conversation with these three and finally decided to send them all back to Gaul to meet Vercingetorix.

This was the reason Lurios returned to the Aveli territory.

However, Lurios originally had an unusual identity and was well aware of Vercingetorix's situation. He knew that during Vercingetorix's father's leadership of the Aveli, his power was strong, with surrounding tribes like the Villavi, Gabari, Cadusi, Petrololi, and Lemovici all following his lead.

At the time, the Aveli dominated vast areas of southern Gaul, which made him arrogant and decided to dissolve the tribal council, declaring himself king and making all tribal decisions alone. This drew the contempt of the nobles and elders, who incited a revolt among the tribesmen that led to his death.

Vercingetorix, along with a part of his loyal subordinates, escaped the Aveli territory, taking refuge with Caesar, who had just become Governor of Gaul and was recruiting cavalry. He became a cavalry captain under his command.

Because of Vercingetorix's identity and abilities, Caesar valued him greatly, but Vercingetorix stayed in the Roman army for only two years. Despite Caesar's attempts to retain him, he quietly returned to the Aveli, began recruiting an army to avenge his father, kill his enemies, and retake Gergovia.

However, the current Aveli leader (Vercingetorix's uncle) and the nobles, having received prior information, preemptively attacked Vercingetorix's camp. With few troops, Vercingetorix suffered a crushing defeat and was forced to flee the Aveli territory once again...

"Half a year ago, Leader Vercingetorix led his army to capture this town, exiled his uncle, and killed those nobles, avenging his father! Now, he is our Aveli leader! Not only does he fight bravely, but seeing our hardship, he even proactively reduced the grain we must pay. He's our Aveli hero! You better be careful with your words; don't call him by name, or you'll invite trouble!" the vendor kindly warned.

"Indeed, he is a hero!" Lurios recalled the things Leader Maximus had talked about, feeling deeply moved.

He carefully adjusted his attire and then strode toward the main house in the center of town.

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Lurios stood in front of the main house, watching a guard run inside. Before long, heavy and hurried footsteps approached from within, and a familiar figure came into view.

This person was about thirty years old, with slightly untidy short golden hair, a broad forehead, a straight nose, and a resolute face. His deep eyes and tall, sturdy build were accentuated by the tight-fitting tribal attire, revealing a muscular silhouette with an aura of unspoken authority.

But upon seeing Lurios, the imposing aura swiftly disappeared, replaced by a face full of joy: "Lurios, you're alive! That's wonderful!"

He laughed heartily, ignoring the guards' attempts to stop him, seemingly unconcerned about the possibility that Lurios, not seen for years, might have sided with the enemy to harm him. He walked briskly forward, opened his arms, and gave Lurios a tight hug.

While embracing, he whispered apologetically, "Lurios, I'm sorry! That day we were defeated, and after barely escaping their pursuit and rallying my scattered forces, I found you weren't among us. Some said you were captured, others said you had fallen..."

Back then, having just suffered a rout, people were anxious. I could only lead them to escape the Avelli territory first, so I didn't send someone back to the camp to search for you and the other lost comrades in time..."

Lurios also hugged him tightly and said excitedly, "How can you be blamed? It wasn't easy for you to escape with the remnants at that time! Fortunately, you did, so you could retake Gergovia now! I'm happy for you, Vercingetorix, you've finally fulfilled your promise!"

The two held each other tightly for a while before Vercingetorix released his arms, feeling both relieved and puzzled, and asked, "After capturing this town, I interrogated my damn uncle and learned that you were captured by them and sold as a slave to the Romans. Did you escape from the Romans?"

Lurios shook his head, glanced at the others beside Vercingetorix, and said solemnly, "I did not escape from the Romans nor became their slave. I came this time entrusted with an extremely important matter to discuss with you alone!"

Immediately, someone objected, "Leader, although Lurios was once under your command, we don't know his situation in recent years. You mustn't—"

Vercingetorix waved his hand to stop him, loudly saying, "Lurios was a reliable subordinate of my father! After my father's death, he steadfastly refused my uncle's bribes and fully assisted me in rallying my father's former forces and assembling an army to suppress the rebellion. He's like an elder brother to me, and no matter in the past or now, his help to me is selfless!"

Chapter 533: The Oracle of the Danu Goddess (Part 1)

Lurios listened to these words, his emotions stirred.

"Come, let's talk in the room." Vercingetorix enthusiastically grasped Lurios's arm and led him into the living room, then dismissed the others.

When only the two of them remained in the hall, Lurios coughed lightly and said, "That day, your uncle led the troops to raid the camp, I was captured by them. Your uncle urged me to surrender. After I refused, he sold me and other captured tribesmen to Roman slave traders.

We were escorted to Inner Gaul (which is the Northern Italy Province) and sold at a slave market in a town called Ravenna. A few days later, I was bought by a merchant who claimed to be from the Roman Illyria Province...

The merchant took us, dozens of comrades including me, eastward by carriage, getting further and further from our homeland. I thought about escaping, but there were more than a dozen fully armed guards watching over the entire group. I was constantly hungry with no opportunity to flee...

When the group crossed the Adriatic Bay and entered the territory of the Illyria Province, those guards did not take us to any Roman-controlled coastal towns but instead directly led us over the eastern mountains...

It was only then they told us they were not citizens of a Roman-governed province but from the Nix Tribe in the mountains. The reason they bought us was to prevent us from continuing to be enslaved by the Romans, so we could gain freedom and become tribesmen of their tribe—"

Vercingetorix, who was listening intently, couldn't help but interrupt, "What kind of people is this Nix Tribe?"

"At that time, they told us the Nix Tribe was a mixed tribe composed of Illyrians, Celts, and a few other races who had been enslaved by the Romans. Their leader, Maximus, although an Illyrian, is the reincarnation of the offspring of the Danu Goddess, deeply blessed by the Goddess—"

Vercingetorix interrupted him in astonishment, "Wait, what did you say?! That tribe's leader is the offspring of the Danu Goddess?! Are you sure you are referring to the Danu Goddess familiar to us Gauls?!"

"It is precisely our revered Danu Goddess!" Lurios emphasized, "We were also surprised to hear this, and they also said that it was because the Danu Goddess had given their Leader Maximus an oracle to save all the Gauls enslaved by the Romans. Leader Maximus ordered them to disguise themselves as merchants from the Illyria Province, using the money they had worked hard to earn, to buy our Gaulish compatriots in large numbers from the Inner Gaul slave market..."

At that time, we did not entirely believe what they said, but we knew we were already far from home. Even if we managed to escape, powerful Romans and other unfamiliar tribes stood in the way of returning home. It was more probable to fall back into Roman hands and suffer even more brutal punishment—"

As he spoke, Lurios's left hand caressed a noticeable scar on his right shoulder, where a slave's mark was branded.

"...We started cooperating with those guards to cross the mountains. Although the mountain paths were long and difficult to walk, it was apparent they were prepared. Every segment of the paths had a camp where we could rest and replenish, so there were basically no illnesses or people collapsing from exhaustion.

After about ten days, we crossed the mountains and entered the territory of an Illyrian tribe called the Alde, an ally of the Nix Tribe.

Later, I learned that the Alde Tribe had been so weakened that they were entirely dependent on the Nix Tribe, allowing us to travel unimpeded within the Alde's territory and receive excellent hospitality. Soon, we boarded a ship and sailed north into the Nix Tribe's lands. After a few days of sailing, we entered a wider river, then another even larger river... finally reaching the central town of the Nix Tribe—Yeriboli (meaning Holy City, on the north bank of the Delaware River's middle course).

During this journey, we passed through several Nix towns, all bustling and prosperous. I also saw that both riverbanks were flat and vast lands cultivated into fields, where tribesmen were using cattle and horses to plow; riverside roads resembled Roman roads—wide, flat, solid, and crowded with people. Oh, and they had built many bridges over the river, high enough for ships to pass below...

For a while, I thought those guards were deceiving us, that this so-called Nix Tribe was actually Roman-controlled land. But I later realized I was wrong; the Nix Tribe not only didn't belong to Rome but also had a grudge against it!—"

Vercingetorix's heart skipped a beat, and he couldn't help asking, "Lurios, are you saying this powerful and wealthy... Nix Tribe has a grudge against the Romans?!"

Lurios didn't answer directly but asked back, "Vercingetorix, do you know when the Nix Tribe was established?"

"How could I know? I just learned the name Nix Tribe from you," Vercingetorix found Lurios's question somewhat amusing.

"Eighteen years ago!" Lurios emphasized, speaking solemnly, "Eighteen years ago, Leader Maximus, with the help of the Aldeans, established the Nix Tribe. Over these eighteen years, the Nix Tribe defeated the Pannonian Tribe Alliance, which almost destroyed the Alde Tribe, and fully occupied their lands. Then they defeated the even stronger Boyi people and the Taurisci, annexing their lands as well.

They even defeated the Germans, who made us Gauls fearful. Now, the Nix Tribe's territory is much larger than our entire Southern Gaul region. It is precisely because of the Nix Tribe's strength that other surrounding tribes sought alliances with it, and even the powerful Dacians formed an alliance with Nicos..."

Vercingetorix listened in amazement. If it weren't for the fact that the speaker was Lurios, he would definitely have thought the other was boasting.

Vercingetorix had seen extremely powerful forces before; Caesar only took a few years to make the entire Gaul region bow down, supported by the continuous backing of the entire Roman world. However, according to Lurios, the Nix Tribe was established with the assistance of the nearly vanquished Aldeans by the Pannonians. What could they rely on?

Thinking of this, Vercingetorix directly asked, "What did the Nix Tribe rely on to defeat these powerful enemies?"

Lurios anticipated Vercingetorix's question. He gazed at his companion, with a nervous yet expectant look, but slowed his speech to ensure each word reached his ears clearly: "What did the Nix Tribe rely on to defeat so many powerful enemies in just a little over a decade? When Leader Maximus assigned me to find you, he revealed a secret the Nix Tribe had kept for years and required me to swear to the Danu Goddess, not to tell anyone else except you!—"

"Rest assured! I promise too, I won't tell this secret to anyone!" Vercingetorix seemed to understand why Lurios wanted to speak with him privately, and he made a solemn promise.

Receiving the promised response, Lurios solemnly said, "Leader Maximus told me he was once a Roman slave. Unwilling to endure enslavement, he followed Spartacus and those gladiators to instigate a revolt in Rome's Campania Region, organizing other slaves and poor people to resist the Romans—"

"Ah? Spartacus!" Vercingetorix exclaimed.

The Avelli often traded with the Romans, so, of course, he had heard of Spartacus's great rebellion that disturbed all of Italy. Recently, he even occasionally thought of this event to inspire himself, but he hadn't expected one of the participants to be the Nix Tribe's leader, making him even more interested in what Lurios would say next.

"...Leader Maximus led a separate team following Spartacus, winning multiple victories against the Romans. However, as Spartacus and others were unwilling to leave Italy, he had to lead his team over the mountains alone, entering the Aldeans' territory, eventually establishing the Nix Tribe.

He had over ten thousand subordinates at that time, most being robust warriors, all equipped with weapons and armor captured from the Romans. They could proficiently utilize Roman tactics and possessed rich combat experience and strict discipline...

And the Pannonians, completely ignorant of them, thought they would be as easily defeated as the Aldeans, so they underestimated the enemy, resulting in consecutive losses that allowed the Nix to secure a foothold..."

Vercingetorix's expression turned a little bleak, as he thought how the situation of the Gauls fighting the Romans in the past few years was somewhat similar to what Lurios described.

"...Once the Nix Tribe secured a foothold, they could continuously defeat other powerful tribes, expanding their tribe into one of the most powerful forces on that vast Great River Plain in just a little over a decade. There is another crucial reason—"

Lurios's voice suddenly escalated: "That is the blessing of the Danu Goddess! Because Leader Maximus is the offspring of the Danu Goddess, she has continually blessed the entire Nix Tribe!

She continuously imparted knowledge unknown in our world to Leader Maximus in dreams, enabling the tribesmen of the Nix Tribe to use this knowledge, allowing their fields to yield far more crops than ours, enabling their workshops to produce more, cheaper, yet better goods, and enabling their craftsmen to create some extremely terrifying weapons we've never seen before...

Therefore, the Nix Army is incredibly strong, and the populace is extremely wealthy. The other tribes there, even if they have more tribesmen and larger territories, can't possibly compete with them!..."

Chapter 534: The Oracle of the Danu Goddess (Part 2)

Despite listening intently, Vercingetorix remained silent.

Lurios understood that this young and shrewd leader had doubts about the claim that "the Nix Tribe Chief is the offspring of the Danu Goddess," so he further explained, "In fact, the reason I hurried from the Nix Tribe to see you this time is due to the prophecy from the Danu Goddess!"

"Oh?! What prophecy?!" Vercingetorix finally showed interest.

"A few months ago, the Danu Goddess gave a prophecy to Leader Maximus—" Lurios leaned slightly forward, his eyes meeting Vercingetorix's with a probing gaze. His voice was soft, yet it carried a certain gravity: "The Danu Goddess told Leader Maximus that next year in the region of Gaul, there will be an uprising of the Gaul populace against the Romans. The one leading the Gaul warriors against the Romans will mainly be a leader named Vercingetorix!

This war will cause great trouble for the Romans, but eventually, the Romans will achieve victory. By that time, all the brave Gauls will be slaughtered, and the Gaul leaders like Vercingetorix, who led the war, will be taken to Rome to participate in the Roman victory parade, where they will be mocked and ridiculed by the Romans before ultimately meeting their demise...

Henceforth, no Gaul Tribe will dare to resist the Romans anymore; they will all bow under the Romans' feet, willingly enslaved by them. As the years pass, Gaul will eventually be annexed by Rome, and the name Gaul along with its traditions will cease to exist..."

As he spoke to this point, Lurios's expression became exceedingly grave, and he spoke with a resounding tone: "The Danu Goddess could not bear to see the Gauls, who honor Her, meet such a tragic end, which is why She informed Her offspring, 'Nix Tribe Chief Maximus,' to make sure he finds this Gaul leader named Vercingetorix and stop him from launching this war to prevent the annihilation of the Gauls!"

When Lurios finished these words, time seemed to stand still; Vercingetorix's expression froze on his face, eyes wide with disbelief, with lips slightly parted that never completed the words "This is impossible." His body only trembled slightly, which was a testament to the immense shock Lurios' words brought upon his previous beliefs.

Lurios knew Vercingetorix well. His mood suddenly turned joyful yet was accompanied by a sense of terror as he quickly stretched out his hands, palms facing the sky, bowing his head in sincere prayer: "Great and merciful Danu Goddess, please forgive your follower Lurios for doubting You!..."

Vercingetorix came back to his senses, blankly watching Lurios who was devoutly repenting, and murmured with some confusion: "That Roman Elder called Caesar, after he became Governor of Gaul, we Avelli, following past traditions, welcomed his arrival and even offered some support at the beginning.

But later I discovered that this Caesar did not come as an ally to us Gauls, to help us solve some conflicts and troubles, but instead, he wants to conquer our entire Gaul territory, making all Gaul tribes obey him and submit to him so that he can decide at will who will serve as tribal leader, can execute any Gaul noble at will, and can requisition grain and supplies from each tribe, not caring at all if our Gaul tribesmen starve to death due to lack of food...

Now, in the entire region of Gaul, among each tribe—whether leaders, nobles, or ordinary tribe members—no one can guarantee their safety, and everyone is restless. So not long ago, I secretly invited those tribe leaders who had once depended on us Avelli, had been under our protection, and were not close to the Romans, to gather in Gegauvia.

Everyone agrees that we can't stay silent any longer. We must unite quickly to resist the Romans. Otherwise, having a fate like the Sinone leader Aco, who was arbitrarily executed by Caesar, will eventually befall us.

Moreover, the many leaders who attended this gathering promised that they would go back and secretly contact other tribal leaders who hadn't gotten the news but bore hatred towards the Romans, to have them participate in the next secret gathering to jointly discuss how to resist the Romans.

The leader of the Carnit tribe also said that Gegauvia is too close to the Roman province, making it hard to keep secrets. It was suggested that future secret meetings be held within his territory...

Furthermore, several leaders at this opportunity believed that Avelli had not been destroyed by the Romans in the past few years and is the strongest, and I, Vercingetorix—"

Vercingetorix displayed a hint of pride, speaking in a deep voice: "Being able to lead a group of homeless tribesmen and warriors from various tribes, and eventually defeat my uncle who had a large army, reclaiming Gegauvia and avenging my father, proves my excellent military command ability. I also spent a few years in the Roman Army and understand Roman military tactics better than other leaders...Therefore, everyone has elected me to be the commander of this military operation against the Romans!

As the gathering was about to end, we placed the flags of the various tribes together and took a sacred oath to follow the requirements of the gathering, resolutely fight against the Romans, and never betray!...

For this reason, I have been collecting grain during this time and have started recruiting those Gaul warriors who lost their homes and are wandering around due to the atrocities of the Romans. I believe, Lurios, you saw us on your way into this stronghold—"

Vercingetorix glared at Lurios, a low growl of discontent rising from deep within his throat: "All the tribes that hate the Romans are fervently preparing to ignite the fires of rebellion across the entire region of Gaul, yet you are asking me to stop the war at this moment!"

Lurios was overwhelmed by his gaze and hurriedly defended, "It's not me asking you to stop the war; this is the prophecy from the Danu Goddess!—"

"Even if it's the Danu Goddess's prophecy—" Vercingetorix's tone softened somewhat, but his expression grew increasingly resolute: "Even if we stop resisting the Romans, can we prevent the extermination of us Gauls? No, that would only delay our death! We would end up as their pet hounds, slavishly complying with every harsh demand the Romans make, forgetting our pride as Gauls!"

We Gauls love to fight and are brave in battle. We are a race born from warfare; even knowing we face extinction, we will shed the last drop of blood on the battlefield!—"

Lurios quickly interrupted him: "No, Vercingetorix, the all-knowing and all-powerful Danu Goddess is not asking you to stop the war against the Romans, but hopes you can postpone it. I haven't finished conveying the prophecy of the Danu Goddess—"

"Postpone the war against the Romans?!" Vercingetorix was taken aback.

Lurios firmly declared, "Yes, postpone the war! Do not start it next year, but the year after!"

"Why should it be the year after?" Vercingetorix was puzzled.

Because the year after, there will be a civil war in Rome, with that Caesar and a Roman Elder named Pompey as the heads of the opposing sides. The scale of this civil war will be enormous, involving all the provinces of Rome, and the fighting will be very fierce. One side is determined to completely annihilate the other at all costs, so this civil war will last for several years!

By that time, that Caesar will be fully engaged dealing with political adversaries, and he will withdraw most of the Roman Army stationed in our Gaul region. At that time, if you launch the war, it would be relatively easy to defeat the remaining small Roman force stationed in Gaul, freeing the tribes from Roman control..." Lurios spoke with utmost seriousness, as if witnessing the entire development firsthand.

Vercingetorix fell into contemplation.

The Aveli, having relatively frequent trade with Rome, somewhat understood Rome, and Vittori, having spent some time in Caesar's army, knew even more.

He knew that the political situation in Rome had been tumultuous these past few years. He also knew that earlier this year, Rome had been so chaotic that it hadn't even elected a Governor for a long period. There were even rumors that Rome had descended into chaos and that Caesar had returned to Inner Gaul earlier than in previous years to winter over, which led some Gaul leaders to believe that Caesar might rush back to Rome and not return to Gaul, which was why they decided to launch an attack on the Roman Army the following year.

Being well-acquainted with Rome, Vercingetorix carefully pondered Lurios's words before eventually asking, "Caesar and Pompey have long formed an alliance, their relationship is very close; everyone in Italy knows this. How could they possibly become opponents?"

"Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus indeed formed an alliance long ago, jointly controlling Rome, but you might not know that Crassus has just died this year in a war with the Parthians. The alliance among the three is no longer in existence, and last year Caesar's dowry-wife, Pompey's daughter, also died in childbirth, so the relationship between them is not as close anymore.

Caesar, in order to conquer our Gaul, continues to expand his army, which has become a threat to Rome. The Roman Elders have long wanted to remove him as Governor of Gaul and disband his army; they just didn't have the courage. Now they see an opportunity, and they will certainly try every possible means to draw Pompey, who could oppose Caesar, into their camp and then have the confidence to summon Caesar back to Rome to face trial.

Will that ruthless and ambitious Caesar willingly give up everything he possesses and go back to Rome to be punished?! A civil war happened in Rome several decades ago, back then it was the war between Marius and Sulla, now it's just replacing them with Caesar and Pompey."

"Is this also the prophecy of the Danu Goddess?! Vercingetorix found Lurios's analysis well-reasoned, feeling deeply astonished.

Chapter 535: Another Anti-Roman Alliance

"No, this is what Leader Maximus specifically instructed me before I left the Nix Tribe, fearing you might hesitate. He has always harbored deep hatred for Rome and has been closely monitoring Rome's movements. His understanding of Rome far surpasses yours."

Lurios looked at Vercingetorix, who was deep in thought and silent, and decided to add fuel to the fire: "Leader Maximus also told me that when the prophecy of the Danu Goddess is fulfilled the year after next and a civil war breaks out in Rome, he will personally lead the Nix Army over the mountains and into Northern Italy!

If at that time we start a war in Gaul, we can easily crush the Roman Army left in Gaul and then attack Italy, joining forces with the Nix Army in the Northern Italy Province to march on Rome. Even if Caesar or Pompey leads an army to intercept us, they may not be able to defeat our massive allied forces!

Moreover, Leader Maximus also told me that he has persuaded other forces to attack Rome's Eastern Province during the Roman civil war, thus tying down Rome's military strength, preventing them from having enough reinforcements to defend Rome.

And once we capture Rome, it will surely shock all the regions and provinces conquered by Rome. Those nations like us, unwilling to be enslaved by Rome, will surely rise up to resist, and by then the entire Mediterranean under Roman rule will collapse. We Gauls will no longer have to worry about Roman aggression, and you will be celebrated as a hero by the Gauls, just like King Brennus who captured Rome."

Vercingetorix was stirred by Lurios' words because it was precisely what he hoped for, but when he thought about the current state of Gaul, his mood involuntarily grew heavy. He sighed lightly, "Ah... I have already made agreements with many leaders to take action next year! Even the Carnutes are willing to be the first to attack the Roman Army stationed near their tribe. Everyone is eager to act because due to the Romans' constant grain collection, many of our compatriots are starving. If the action is delayed for another year, I don't know if some tribes can hold on—"

Lurios was about to continue persuading when Vercingetorix waved his hand to stop him, clenched his fist, and gritted his teeth, saying, "But the Danu Goddess has given an oracle. To ensure our resistance

can succeed and prevent Gaul from perishing, I will do my utmost to persuade them! But now I want to know—"

Vercingetorix looked intently at Lalala, speaking with solemnity, "Lurios, you are a Gaul, and I have always regarded you as an elder brother! Now all our hopes, we Gauls, are pinned on the year after next. Can you be sure that the Nix Tribe leader truly intends to lead the army into Italy in the year after next?!"

Lurios said nothing, carefully taking out a rolled-up parchment from his bosom and handing it to Vercingetorix.

Vercingetorix took it, unrolled it, and saw that many Latin words were written on this specially made parchment.

The Avelli have been allies with Rome for many years, and the trade between them is frequent. As the son of the Avelli leader, Vercingetorix learned some Latin from a young age, so he could understand.

The parchment clearly stated: Great and benevolent Danu Goddess, I swear to follow your oracle and send troops to Italy during the Roman civil war to ally with the Gauls and attack Rome! If I break this oath, may I not die well!... Maximus, vowed in the twentieth year of the establishment of the Nix Tribe..."

After reading the last passage, Vercingetorix curiously touched the snake-like pattern drawn after the text.

"That is the sacred relic 'Dragon' worshipped by the Nix Tribe, said to be the incarnation of Maximus in the Danu Divine Country, possessing extraordinary divine power, ever-changing, and the unique emblem of the leader! I saw with my own eyes when Leader Maximus wrote this parchment and stamped it with the great seal!"

Lurios spoke solemnly, "Almost all the tribesmen of the Nix Tribe revere the Danu Goddess, and Leader Maximus is not only the offspring of the Danu Goddess but also the High Priest of the Danu Temple within the tribe. He absolutely cannot break his oath!"

"Now I am completely relieved!" Vercingetorix's heart settled completely, then he asked reluctantly, "Lurios, will you return to the Nix Tribe next?"

"No, I will stay, and fight alongside you for us Gauls!" Lurios said with determination.

"That's great!" Vercingetorix smiled and clapped loudly, but then he remembered something, looking troubled, "I intend to write a vow like Leader Maximus, but how can I send my vow and the news of our alliance back to the Nix Tribe?"

"You needn't worry, Leader Maximus has also sent others to Gaul to find you—"

Before Lurios finished speaking, the sound of a guard came from outside the hall: "Leader, a tribesman from another tribe insists on seeing you, saying he has important matters concerning the survival of all the Gaulish tribes to tell you!"

Lurios smiled and reminded, "The messenger connecting with the Nix Tribe has arrived!"

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Vercingetorix did his utmost to persuade those tribal leaders dissatisfied with Caesar and eager to attack the Roman Army, but he kept his promise to Lurios and did not reveal the participation of the Nix Tribe, only saying that he had received an oracle from the Danu Goddess in a dream, foretelling a civil war in Rome the year after next, and that war against the Romans then would be more likely to succeed.

He even detailed the intelligence he had specifically had people gather about Rome, analyzing the possibility of a Roman civil war to the leaders.

Some leaders were persuaded, while others, although skeptical, knew that if powerful tribes like the Avelli and their close allies did not take action the next year, acting alone would only bring disaster to their tribe.

Vercingetorix knew that delaying action for a year would displease some tribes, so he promised these leaders that if their tribes faced food shortages in the coming time, he would do his utmost to provide them with food assistance!

Many leaders were moved by Vercingetorix's sincerity and finally agreed to postpone the war for a year.

Thus, the leaders once again gathered their tribal banners and held a solemn oath ceremony.

But Gaul is vast and contains many tribes, and Vercingetorix could not contact all tribes hostile to Rome. Throughout the entire year of 52 BC, there were still sporadic Gaulish tribal attacks on Roman garrisons, killing Roman grain collection officers and slave traders, but their scale was small, and Caesar did not need to personally command them before they were quelled by the Roman legions stationed there.

As expected, these rebellious Gaulish tribes met tragic ends. Involved leaders and nobles were executed, villages and settlements were burned down, and the warriors and their families were enslaved...

Vercingetorix and other Gaulish leaders who witnessed their compatriots' miserable fate could only hide their hatred and endure in silence...

However, the occasional small disturbances in Gaul made Caesar also cautious. On one hand, he kept most of his forces stationed in Gaul to stabilize the situation, and on the other hand, he strongly supported Gaulish tribes and leaders close to and willing to obey him, like the Remi Tribe, the Edui Tribe...

Caesar focused more on Rome, where the situation was becoming increasingly turbulent, causing him unease.

Last year's consular election had left Rome without consuls and senior officials for nearly six months due to blatant bribery incidents, and this year's consular election saw horrific bloodshed.

One of the consular candidates, Claudius, this famous Roman and gang leader, was killed by his old rival Milo during a conflict.

Claudius' family and followers wreaked havoc in Rome to vent their anger, causing significant unrest, nearly plunging Rome into anarchy.

Hence, the Senate convened an emergency meeting, and with the support of figures like Bibulus and Cato, Pompey was directly appointed as the sole consul.

Pompey's third term as consul once again broke Roman tradition; he was not elected by Roman citizens but was appointed directly by the Senate. Traditionally, consuls were escorted only by their Law Enforcement Officers, but Pompey brought armed soldiers into the city to maintain order.

He tried Milo, exiling him to Massilia; he also introduced new laws that curtailed the impact of electoral bribery on Rome... Thanks to his strong interventions, order was restored in Rome.

During this time, he also resolved his personal issues.

Cornelia, the daughter of the Roman Patrician Metellus Scipio and widow of Crassus' son Publius, due to the Battle of Kale, was young, beautiful, and charming. Pompey decided to marry her, and it was agreed.

He quickly fell into marital bliss and, through this marriage, established connections with some families within the core of the Roman elite.

Perhaps influenced by them, Pompey enacted a decree: prohibiting absentee candidacy in consular elections.

This angered Caesar because he hoped to directly assume the consulship after leaving Gaul, not wanting to return as a regular citizen and potentially face lawsuits from opposing Senators during that waiting period.

Therefore, Caesar had his People's Guardians propose a bill—expressly allowing him to run in absentia.

On the persuasion of Caesar's allies, Pompey personally wrote a supplementary clause—allowing Caesar to run in absentia, which was appended to the new decree, meaning their alliance, though weakened compared to previous years, was still effective.