

## Civilization 1021

Chapter 1021: Eastern Expedition Grand Sacrifice! Slaying Evil, The Immortal Sun!\_3

Aweit looked around, laughing with disdain. But at that moment, a crawling body suddenly lunged at him from behind.

"Huh?"

In an instant, Aweit felt his waist tighten as someone hugged him fiercely from behind. Then, that person desperately reached out, grabbing the bronze axe from the King's waist, attempting to pull it out.

"Ha?!"

Aweit raised his eyebrows, a hint of surprise flashed across his face. The samurai behind him saw this and surged toward the King in unison.

"All of you stand back! Get lost!"

Aweit shouted fiercely, like a fierce tiger. Then, he extended his left hand to hold the arm behind him, while his right hand raised a dagger sharply, drawing an arc, and thrust it toward his own side! It was exactly where the bronze axe was.

"Puchi!..."

The sound of the dagger piercing flesh came instantly. Then, it twisted mercilessly.

"Ugh! Ah!..."

Intense pain came, and Okote screamed in agony. In an instant, a bloody hole appeared in his palm. He lost all strength and could no longer hold the newly grabbed weapon.

"Clang!"

The bronze axe fell to the stone ground, making a crisp sound. Aweit's eyes turned sharp, and he grabbed Okote's hair with his left hand, picked up the bronze axe from the ground with his right. Then, under the watchful eyes of hundreds of thousands, he pressed the revered Lord of Snake City, the nominal King of Tlaxcala, onto the sacrificial stone.

"Hunt...ing God! Please let me...go to..."

Okote moaned weakly, revealing his vulnerable neck, like the Cloud Serpent exposing its seven inches.

"Chief Divine's blessing! Slay the evil Cloud Serpent!"

Aweit roared fiercely. Then, he suddenly raised the bronze axe high, and aimed at the serpent's seven inches, brought it down with a thud.

"Splash!"

A large splatter of crimson covered the King's head and face. Aweit extended his left arm, using his magnificent war clothes to wipe his blood-red eyes. Then, he discarded the bronze axe, raised his right hand high, holding Okote's open-eyed head, looking at the hundreds of thousands of citizens in the capital city, and shouted boldly!

"Roar! The Chief Divine blesses me to slay evil in all directions!... From today on, I am your new immortal Sun!"

Upon seeing the King's blood-drenched declaration, witnessing this shocking scene, the people below the Great Temple were momentarily silent. Moments later, hysterical cheers erupted from the mouths of hundreds of thousands, without any need for guidance!

"Divine King! Divine King! The Chief Divine blesses the Mexica, raising the immortal Sun!...The immortal Divine King!!"

"Hahaha!"

Aweit looked up at the sun in the sky, laughing loudly, ignoring any other gazes. The twelve elder priests glanced at each other, their expressions changing momentarily, then gradually lowering their heads. The nobility and samurai shouted with excitement, their blood pumping. At this instant, they all saw a new sun rising slowly from the top of the Great Temple.

"Haha! Satisfying!"

Aweit was extremely pleased. He laughed recklessly for a while, then looked at the prostrate crowd, casually throwing Okote's dripping head down the Great Temple. Then, his expression turned stern as he looked at the twelve elder priests, commanding them like a supreme Divine.

"Uguel, the grand sacrifice is not over! Continue to sacrifice the Divine Descendants to please the Divine and the multitude!"

"As you command... immortal Divine King."

"Good! Someone, go and call over the Mistec people's envoy for me!"

At this point, Aweit, covered in blood, turned around boldly. Just like that, wearing heavy armor and carrying the Great Shield Copper Axe, he sat back upon the Throne of the Gods, his words filled with unmistakable murderous intent.

"I will be right here, waiting for his audience!"

Chapter 1022: Eastern Expedition Grand Ceremony! The Golden Crow Soars, Igniting the World!

The sunset gradually descends westward, illuminating the fiery clouds. The towering Great Temple is suffused with blood-red light, reflecting in the pale red Lake Texcoco, resembling the legendary and imposing Snake Mountain. The sacred sacrifice continues, the chant of the Priests echoing across the sky. The fervent cries of hundreds of thousands of people sound like the Thunderbolt in the hands of the Chief Divine. At this moment, the rolling thunder reverberates between the crimson sky, the dark red temple, and the blood-colored lake, as if the red Divine Kingdom has descended.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise the Divine King! Repay with devotion, repay with sacrifice and blood!"

This is the cry desiring war, representing the will of the Mexica people. This terrifying wave of shouts weighs heavily on the hearts of each foreign envoy, witnessed by the blood of the Tlaxcala Divine Descendants.

"The sun of the Mexica people, unlike the mountain forests of the South, is blood-colored indeed!"

Mistec envoy Yun Zhao bowed his head, cautiously treading on the blood-stained ground. Adorned with exquisite gold ornaments and wearing a shining silver crown, he donned a fine white robe with cloud patterns, and his legs bore turquoise-encrusted bands. His entire being radiated Treasure Light, moving gracefully, showcasing the reverence of his ancient lineage. In reality, among those in the South's clouds, bearing the surname 'Cloud' and the name 'Sun' signifies his noble status.

"To the mighty, valiant, and revered Mexica King, descendant of the great Tiger Claw King, honorable nobility of Mountain River City, Mistec envoy Yun Zhao pays his respects!"

Yun Zhao reached the top of the Great Temple, respectfully bowing from a dozen steps away to the Mexica King, the most powerful man on earth, seated on the Throne of the Gods. Then, he carefully extended his hand, retrieving a rather long silver box from his bosom, offering it to the King's guard.

"Honorable King Aweit, this is a tribute from Great Chief Yun Chen of Mountain River City. Inside is a bunch of Chager Bird feathers and a Golden Crown inlaid with turquoise, rare treasures of the world! May your majesty be as everlasting as turquoise, your brilliance as radiant as gold, and your divinity as soaring as feathers!"

Having spoken, Yun Zhao knelt, prostrating himself in a grand gesture of respect. The rich stench of blood immediately assailed his nostrils, causing him some discomfort.

Aweit received the silver box after the guard's inspection, glanced at it indifferently, and his expression suddenly turned cold. He held the silver box in his hand, gazing expressionlessly at the prostrate envoy Yun Zhao, remaining silent.

The King remained voiceless, and suddenly, the Great Temple fell into dead silence. Numerous Samurai gripped their Bronze Axes, eyeing the frail envoy like tigers and wolves. Only the sacrificial offerings by the Elder Priests continued steadily, filling the ears with sound.

"Descendants of the Jiao People, Mistec Divine Descendant, hereditary noble of Divine Stone City, warrior Yun Shan, journeying to the War God's realm! His spirit will battle for the Sun God in the sky for four years, then descend to the southern valley, transforming into a majestic dahlia!"

Hearing this familiar name, Mistec envoy Yun Zhao trembled inside. He turned his head and saw a blue corpse tumbling down from the high pyramid. Meanwhile, scorching green smoke rose from the adjacent blazing Sacred Fire.

"... Res... Respectable King..."

The Sacred Fire blazed fiercely, bringing with it an approaching heatwave and an unsettling smell. Beads of sweat began to form on envoy Yun Zhao's forehead. As he turned back, he saw Aweit's expression, a mix of amusement and disdain, along with the blood-stained Bronze Axe in his hand.

"You... what is this?..."

"I have heard that several months ago, Great Chief Yun Chen of Mountain River City, accompanied by tens of thousands of warriors, allied with Viko, the chief priest of Divine Stone City, and conducted the Rain Divine ceremony in the Cloud Temple, subduing the military leaders of Divine Stone City."

Aweit spoke with an enigmatic tone, recounting the upheavals occurring five or six hundred li away as if he had witnessed them firsthand.

"Now, Yun Chen claims to be the Guardian of the Cloud Temple and the leader of the Mistec Alliance. He commands the southern factions, intending to unify the Mistec tribes and oppose the Alliance?"

"... Ah! This, honorable King Aweit!... Leader Yun Chen is loyal and devoted, the clouds and sun in the sky can attest to this!... Divine Stone City dared to wage war against the Alliance. Leader Yun Chen's campaign was to uphold the Alliance's dignity, leading the factions of Teotihuacan in allegiance to the Alliance..."

Envoy Yun Zhao trembled as he hastily defended himself.

"Ha! Begone!"

Aweit's expression turned fierce as he threw! The heavy and precious silver box nearly knocked Yun Zhao to the ground as it struck him!

"A mere subordinate of the Alliance, a humble City-State leader, dare present me with a Golden Crown?!"

Aweit, filled with rage, pointed fiercely at the prostrate and trembling Mistec envoy with the Divine Staff of gemstones.

"Go back, tell Yun Chen! The eastern campaign of the Alliance must not be secretly obstructed by the Mistec tribes as vassals?! This is an offense to the Chief Divine's majesty, warranting severe punishment!"

"Tell him! Do not think that the blockage of mountains and forests will stop the Alliance's corps! The offending Tarasco Kingdom and Tlaxcala Alliance have been obliterated!... Lowland Mistec tribes must offer tribute four times this year, doubling the usual! Mountain River City must send ten Divine Descendants and five thousand people as a penalty for offending the Alliance!"

"Otherwise, in a moment, a hundred thousand warriors of the Alliance will head south, turning the Lowland Mistec tribes and Mountain River City five hundred li away to ashes!..."

Aweit's rebuke was relentless and unquestionable. The wrath of the emperor could lay corpses over a hundred miles and shed blood over a thousand li. In front of this sacrificial temple for Divine Descendants, such intimidation was particularly formidable.

However, the armies of the Alliance, having endured the harsh eastward campaign, had just disbanded and were recuperating. The northern forces had lost over fifty thousand, with fifteen thousand warriors wounded or dead. Additionally, with the passing of the Alliance's elder leader, instability crept into the northern and southern nations. Continuous wars and supply demands for the eastward campaign left

insufficient grain reserves in the Lake Capital City... Therefore, realistically, it was impossible for the Alliance to launch another Divine War in the short term.

Southern Mistec tribes spanned a vast six hundred li of mountain forests. Their territories were extensive, City-States highly dispersed, and the terrain varied with hills and forests. It was not easy for the Alliance to completely conquer these Cloud tribes without being impeding geography and distance obstacles, potentially posing a significant challenge.

Nonetheless, if the intent were mere plunder, dispatching two or three Warrior Corps southward... to clear villages, burn down forts, raid nearby Mistec villages... capturing able-bodied men for labor, it would be feasible!

This was Yun Chen's concern, and also Aweit's goal. When the Alliance dispatches troops to a vassal, there needs to be a justifiable reason, so they do not provoke defiance against the Chief Divine's authority!

"South Mistec tribes have proclaimed their loyalty, Heaven and Earth can bear witness to this! We do not dare to offend the Chief Divine..."

Before Yun Zhao could finish, King Aweit gripped the Divine Staff with gemstones, striking it against the blue stone Divine Platform, interrupting the Mistec envoy's nonsense.

"Did you remember what I just said?"

"...Yes, of course..."

Aweit lifted the Feather Shield and waved it downward. Tricolored feathers fluttered amidst the blood-red light, resembling the Sun God Bird poised to devour.

"Remember, tell the noble chiefs of the Cloud tribes, tell the Mountain River City's elders! Submission or sacrifice, the choice is Yun Chen's!"

Aweit's lips curled in a meaningful parting remark, leaving behind a profound implication. Meanwhile, he signaled with the Divine Staff, and two Imperial Guards grasped Yun Zhao, taking him down the pyramid.

The king on the Throne of the Gods retained a serene expression, caressing the Divine Staff in his hand. Despite the eastern highland fortress not being fully subdued yet, he already had his eyes set on the South. The fate of the Mistec people was sealed at that very moment.

The Divine Bird, born of the blazing sun, soared high, its feathers dancing within the crimson light like a Sun God Bird ready to devour. Its power formed a mighty Force, ready to turn all that was old and resistant into ashes within the vast and overwhelming blood and fire!

#### Chapter 1023: Basin Edge, New Flames of War

In the chilly and lifeless Trascal Basin of February, the farmlands are barren, villages abandoned, with no villagers in sight for miles, and the fields devoid of any human presence. However, new buds sprout on the wild grass, and fresh shoots extend from pine and cypress trees on the cold plains. Flocks of birds soar in the clear sky, while herds of animals wander in the desolate wilderness. On this lush tropical highland, where human presence suddenly recedes, nature's vitality surges like a tidal wave. The birds and beasts occupy the habitats of humans, flourishing freely until a sharp arrow suddenly shoots in!

"Whiz!"

A wild goose senses the threat and takes off. However, as it just made it halfway into the sky, it suddenly plummets to the ground. Red-haired Hunter Chabo grins, carrying his greatbow, and runs to the water's edge. He grabs the neck of the wild goose, weighs it slightly, and smiles broadly.

"Haha! What a fat bird! It must be at least ten pounds!"

"Wow! Such a large goose!"

Soon, red-haired Hunter Mique emerges from the lush tall grass. Looking at the just-shot wild goose, he grins widely, even drooling with laughter.

"Enough for the two of us to eat for two meals!"



"No! Enough for me alone to eat four meals!"

Red-haired Chabo, holding the wild goose, looked at Hunter Mique sideways and corrected him with a shake of his head.

"Over this past month, I've been running around every day, drilling through the forest, seeking out the Serpent People Tribe hiding like grass mice... I need a good meal to replenish myself!"

"...Chabo, my brother. You can't do that! Sharing half when meeting and sharing the prey with your brothers... it's an old tradition of the wilderness!"

Hunter Mique, with a cheeky face, edged closer. Over the past month, a thousand skilled Dog Clan Warriors have been dispatched into this eastern mountain forest. The birds and beasts in the forest have indeed fallen on hard times. As the game in the forest is limited, the deer and wolves soon disappear. In this situation, to obtain some meat, they can only rely on hunting birds.

"Ha! The wilderness tradition, sharing half when meeting?"

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo chuckled and shook his head.

"No, Mique, my brother. We are now warriors of the Cactus Black Wolf Tribe and must follow the tribe's rules. Thus, upon meeting, there's no share!... "

"...Chabo, this goose, just roasted, doesn't have much flavor."

Hunter Mique, pondering, pursed his lips. Then, he pulled out a small cloth bag from beneath his leather armor lining.

"Look, what's this?"

"Hmm?"

Red-haired Chabo sniffed, the subtle fragrance wafting, carrying the aroma of spices and herbs. His eyes instantly widened in surprise as he asked.

"Oh! This spice? Where did you get it? In the Southern Tribe, while it's delicious, it's not cheap..."

"Haha! This bag of spice was given to us when our squad patrolled eastward by those Totonac Tribes...!"

Hunter Mique boastfully pointed towards the east. Their current position is over two hundred miles east of Tree Snake City, and eighty miles further east is the major city of the Totonacs, Five Mountains City.

"Ha! 'Given' to you?"

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo's mouth twitched with a mocking smile.

"Wasn't it stolen or robbed? Oh, perhaps it wasn't stolen initially but turned into robbery..."

"Uh... Chabo, don't say that, you're no different!"

Hunter Mique scratched his head, posing a soul-searching question, rendering Chabo speechless.

"Chabo, let me tell you. The Serpent People Tribes hidden in the mountains are extremely poor and have nothing valuable. They dig holes everywhere like rats and barely ever use fire, making them hard to find. The Great Chief of Death ordered us to capture... no, persuade these tribes to surrender, which took a considerable effort to bring back just a handful of people..."

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo sighed and nodded in agreement, his expression weary. Spending all day drilling through the forest and searching for dozens of miles, even for the Dog Clan, it's becoming unbearable.

After returning from the southern Rainforest Tribe, the Guajili Legion rested for one or two months. Subsequently, the Great Chief tasked them to head north for a new mission, to persuade (capture) the

remaining parts of Tlaxcala hidden in the mountain forest, then move them to Water Valley City to prepare for this year's spring planting.

As a Dog Clan Army known for swift raids, facing these small tribes lacking able-bodied men and weapons, they would easily capture them. However, the Northern Route Army's sweep was too ruthless. Most of the remnants in the Tlaxcala Valley scattered into small groups of dozens to hundreds, desperately hiding across the two to three hundred miles of forest. They even avoid making fires or building grass huts, choosing to dwell in man-deep burrows. The better-provisioned tribes fled even further, some even onto the Totonac lands.

The Guajili Legion spent two months, only bringing back five to six thousand nearly-starving old and weak. Providing for them to recover their health was necessary before they could even consider telling the Great Chief anything.

Red-haired Chabo thought for a moment, then spoke in a low voice.

"Mique, my brother, you're right. Those fleeing Serpent People Tribes have nothing and even consume our grain... I heard, last month, the Black Wolf Great Chief was furious when he saw the Serpent People tribes we brought back, so much so that he crushed a clay cup in anger!... The Camp Commanders now turn a blind eye, as long as you bring back able-bodied men, regardless of where they come from..."

"Exactly!"

Hearing this, Hunter Mique's eyes lit up. He leaned closer, stretching a hand to point eastward.

"Those Totonac villages to the east are very wealthy! They've got herbs, turkey, those shining shells, and beads... Our squad checked them out, their warriors are stronger than the southern mountain tribes but weaker than the Serpent People Tribes, primarily lacking Militia for archery... With just a Thousand-man Camp, attacking the eastern villages and towns is extremely easy!"

"Herbs, turkey, shining shells and beads? Eastern villages are so wealthy?"

Upon hearing this, red-haired Chabo licked his lips, his eyes gleaming as he glanced at the eastern horizon. The Dog Clan doesn't fear fighting or hard work, just enemies who are impoverished, leading to hard work without any gain.

"In my opinion, instead of endlessly drilling through the forest, we might as well rally the other squads and launch a big raid on the east!"

Hunter Mique's eyes sparkled, and he squeezed the cloth bag so tightly that the spices almost spilled out.

"Gathering five to six hundred men could raid a thousand-member Great Tribe, then bring back the able-bodied men and women along with the spoils!... Just like in the southern mountain tribes!"

"Ah! Let's do it!"

Red-haired Chabo tightened his grip around the wild goose's neck and waved vigorously, pacing back and forth in excitement. Moments later, he hesitated a bit.

"Mique, if we attack the Totonac, what should we do? Quickly, tell me!"

"Haha! I've thought of a good plan!"

"Oh? What's the plan? Quickly, tell me!"

"Haha! We drive a small group of a few dozen from the Serpent People Tribe and force them to the Totonac villages!"

Hunter Mique snickered, pointing to the east. Their position is already more than two hundred miles east of Tree Snake City, and another eighty miles to the east is the large city of the Tototanak, Five Mountains City.

"Ha! You were 'given' it?"

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo's mouth turned up, mocking.

"Surely it wasn't stolen or robbed? Oh, maybe you couldn't steal it initially, so it became stolen..."

"Uh... Chabo, don't just say me, you're no different, right?"

Hunter Mique scratched his head, posing a soul-searching question, leaving Chabo momentarily speechless.

"Chabo, let me tell you. The Serpent People Tribes hidden in the mountains are all so impoverished, without a drop of oil. They're like rats, digging holes everywhere, rarely starting fires, making them hard to find. The Great Chief of the God of Death ordered us to capture... oh, no, to get them to surrender. It took quite some effort, and we only managed a handful of them back..."

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo sighed and nodded in agreement, his expression tired. Spending all day in the forest, searching tens of miles, even for the Dog Clan, it was beginning to be overwhelming.

After the Guajili Legion returned from the southern Rainforest Tribe, they rested for two months. Then, the Great Chief transferred them north for a new mission: to recruit (capture) the remnants of Trascalala hiding in the mountain forests and move them to Water Valley City to prepare for spring planting this year.

As the Dog Clan Army, skilled in swift raids, facing these small tribes that lack able-bodied men and weapons, is surely a walk in the park. However, the Northern Route Army's sweep was too ruthless, and most of the remaining tribes in the Tlaxcala Valley scattered into small groups of dozens to hundreds, desperately hiding in the two to three hundred miles of mountain forest. They even abstain from any flames or building shelters, choosing to live in person-deep burrows. The more food-sufficient tribes fled further, some even crossing into the Totonac people's land.

Guajili Legion spent two months and only managed to bring back five to six thousand nearly-starved elderly and weak, who needed to be fed first before they could even explain things to the Great Chief.

Red-haired Chabo thought for a moment, lowering his voice.

"Mique, my brother, you're right. Those fleeing Serpent People Tribes have nothing and still eat our food... I heard that last month, the Black Wolf Great Chief was furious after seeing the Serpent People Tribe we brought back, to the point where he crushed a clay cup in anger!... The Camp Commanders now turn a blind eye, as long as you bring back able-bodied men, regardless of where they come from..."

"Right!"

Hearing this, Hunter Mique's eyes lit up, and he leaned forward, one hand pointing eastward.

"Those Totonac villages to the east are very wealthy! Not only do they have herbs, but also turkeys and those shiny shells and beads... With just a Thousand-man Camp, attacking the eastern villages and towns is very easy!"

"Herbs, turkey, and shells?"

Hearing this, red-haired Chabo licked his lips, his eyes gleaming as he gazed at the eastern horizon. The Dog Clan doesn't fear fighting or hard work, but only against enemies who have little, leading to hard work for little gain. The North Route Army swept too hard, and the remaining tribes in the Tlaxcala Valley mostly scattered into small bands of a few dozen to a hundred people, hiding desperately across the two to three hundred miles of mountain forest. They would even avoid lighting fires and building huts, opting to dig human-sized holes to live in. And those tribes with more food would escape further, some even into Totonac territory.

After two months of labor, the Guajili Legion had only brought back five to six thousand near-starved elders and weaklings who needed to be nursed before they could even start farming, posing a challenge for the Great Chief to account for.

Red-haired Chabo pondered this for a moment, then spoke quietly, showing agreement with a weary look. Wandering in the forest all day, searching for dozens of miles, even for the Dog Clan, it was becoming unbearable.

"Mique, I heard that the Cactus Black Wolf Great Chief was infuriated when he saw the Serpent People Tribe we brought back last month, furious enough to crush a clay cup in anger!... The Camp

Commanders now turn a blind eye as long as you bring back able-bodied men, regardless of their origin..."

"Yes!"

Hearing this, Hunter Mique scratched his head, squatted down, and then spoke with a sly smirk.

"Haha! I've thought of a good idea!"

"Ah? What idea? Quick, tell me, tell me!"

Upon hearing this, red-haired Chabo's mouth curled up as he ran towards the mountains to the west, clutching the neck of the wild goose tightly.

"I'll go find the other team leaders!"

Hunter Mique chased after him, calling out from behind.

"Run slower, Chabo. That fat goose in your hand..."

"I'll treat you and the other team leaders tonight with it. Your spice will be included too."

The two red-haired hunters, one in front and the other behind, gradually disappeared into the forest's edge. Meanwhile, the Totonac villages to the east remained, unsuspectingly resting under the eastern horizon. Little did anyone know, unexpected events awaited at the eastern Totonac villages in the near future.

## Chapter 1024: Assassination and Night Raid, the Long Siege

The azure mountains were like the sea, White Snake City perched on a hill, quietly standing. The setting sun was like blood as the military camps spread outside Tree Snake City, the samurais bustling. In the grand tent of the main Mexica commander, a brief assassination had just concluded.

Xiulote wore copper armor, a copper sword at his waist, his expression calm as he sat at the upper seat of the grand tent.

To his left was the Shadow Guard Nashu, clad in leather armor and holding a long dagger. To his right was the Guard Commander Ecatl, wearing heavy armor with a short shield and a bronze axe. In front of him was the Shield Guard Ters with a great shield, closely protecting him. The three were on full alert, watching the entrance of the tent, yet none had been stained with blood.

At this moment, a pool of warm blood was silently spreading and gathering at the tent entrance. Xiulote looked at the bodies of four or five young women lying near the tent entrance, with small sharp copper needles in their hands, shook his head, and sighed softly.

"Their figures were graceful, their demeanor charming, each smile and frown captivating... the noble ladies of Tlaxcala, titled envoys, but eager to get close, wanting to be assassins, yet lacking battle experience. Sigh! Compared to her... they still fall short by a lot!"

Upon hearing the king's words laden with emotion, Nashu slightly raised her brows. She nonchalantly straightened her chest, revealing an alluring curve. Then, she reached out her hand, touched the perfectly slightly protruding lower abdomen below the curve, and her lips slightly turned upwards.

At the entrance of the tent, over a dozen trusted aides stained with blood from their copper spears wore hard expressions. Several Prepetcha doctors were carefully examining the bodies of the assassins. Shortly after, the experienced Prepetcha doctor Taka stepped forward cautiously to report back.

"Your Majesty, all the assassins are dead. They only carried copper needles smeared with snake poison, no other hidden weapons."

"Snake poison?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote's expression shifted. He looked at the last girl who committed suicide, her beautiful face slackened by the paralysis, even appearing to smile, an evident effect of a potent neurotoxin. Xiulote thought for a moment, then asked in a deep voice.



"Taka, is there a cure for this poison?"

"Uh!..."

Doctor Taka's heart skipped a beat, and he immediately knelt down on the ground.

"Your Majesty... if we know what snake it is... we might be able to concoct an antidote..."

In other words, if they know nothing, once poisoned, they would just wait for death.

"Hmm. The Telascallans claim to be the descendants of the Cloud Serpent, finally revealing their heritage of using snake poison. Such a heritage is ever more welcome for the Alliance's witch doctors! ... You may withdraw now, take the bodies away and study them carefully."

Xiulote slightly furrowed his brow and gave a light command. He waved his hand, and soon the grand tent was quiet again, leaving only a faint stench of blood. The young king gazed in the direction of White Snake Hill City, pondered for a moment, and sternly ordered Ecatl.

"Ecatl."

"Family Head!"

"White Snake Hill City has been under siege for a full eight months. All support has been cut off, there is no hope at all. Their situation must be dire, hence they took the desperate measure of sending assassins posing as envoys... I reckon the remaining grain in the city is not much, and in their anxiety, they have acted rashly."

Upon analyzing this far, Xiulote slightly deliberated and then issued the military order.

"Have the samurais make a ruckus in the camp, creating the appearance of panic and chaos from the commander's assassination for White Snake City's walls to see! Then, allocate two thousand armored guards to you, ambushing in the small fortifications around the siege trenches. The Telascallans are

highly likely to launch a night raid... When the time comes, it will be your turn to showcase true wisdom and valor!"

"Yes, Family Head! Fighting for you!"

Ecatl knelt on one knee in respect. Then he immediately took his trusted aides and rushed out of the camp to make arrangements. In a short while, thousands of samurais outside the camp began shouting and calling out. Large clouds of dust rising from their running, accompanied by anxious cries, wafted toward the towering White Snake Hill City ten miles away.

Xiulote sat assured in the camp, reading correspondence between the kingdom and the Alliance. In no time, over a dozen Warrior Camp Chiefs from the outer camps hurriedly came to meet the king. Xiulote smiled, calmly reassuring them. After confirming the king's safety, the camp chiefs hurriedly left to arrange the deception strategy.

After half a day of commotion, it finally calmed slightly by nightfall. However, distinct cries echoed outside White Snake City, spurring confusion and unrest.

The moonlight was dim, and the torches sparse. On the high hill around White Snake City, a long trench formed a circle. Ecatl, clad in armor and wielding an axe, patiently waited in the fortifications on both sides of the trench. Deep into the night, White Snake City's gates quietly opened.

Two thousand elite White Snake warriors, all clad in snake-patterned leather armor, silently poured out from the city gates, like long snakes swiftly crawling in the dark. Subsequently, led by a warrior carrying a bow and war club, they slightly regrouped and charged toward the besieging camp, driven by a do-or-die determination!

The long snake advanced, the warriors remaining silent. Long spears glinted, war clubs hung low. The Mexica camp indeed faced issues, and in their panic, a significant flaw emerged in the trench's defense. Hundreds of White Snake warriors quickly crawled over the man-high trenches, unhindered, excitedly breaching the fortifications and rushing into the chaotic camp!

Seeing this, over a thousand warriors behind were all visibly excited. In this era, those capable of night battles were always few. Amidst the chaotic darkness, among the densely populated tens of thousands

of Mexica warriors, only a quarter or a fifth could fight at night. As for the rest of the warriors, once they clashed at night, it could very likely lead to mutual slaughter, resulting in a great defeat.

## Chapter 1025: Assassination and Night Raid, the Long Siege\_2

The Tlaxcala warriors of White Snake City, struggling for months, have borne the despair of lacking food and assistance. Yet now, the hope of victory finally appears before their eyes, like the vast bonfires outside the Mexica main camp!

"Vast bonfires?!"

White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte, carrying a greatbow and holding a war club, rushed to the forefront of the camp. Ahead, dozens of steps away, the bright bonfires almost illuminated half the camp. Sarte paused slightly, his pace slowing. Instinctively, he felt a foreboding—a keen awareness of danger and hostility, honed by years as a veteran warrior.

"Huh?! This situation seems off..."

"Cloud Serpent protect us! Kill the Mexica!"

Those participating in the night raid were the elite warriors of the city, all embracing a do-or-die courage. At this point in the night raid assault, success or failure hinged on an instant, leaving no room for reversal! Hundreds of White Snake warriors raised their war clubs, unleashing their final shouts, then charged into the main camp without pause.

"Whiz, whiz whiz!... Whiz whiz whiz!..."

Even as the last cries echoed, a dense rain of arrows suddenly appeared before them, bringing the howling of death!

A thousand Imperial Guards crossbowmen and two thousand legion archers emerged from behind the camp walls simultaneously, rapidly shooting deadly copper feathered arrows at the hundreds of exposed Tlaxcalan warriors in the firelight. In mere moments, dying wails resounded outside the encampment! The large group of White Snake warriors fell like autumn-harvested beans, collapsing into

a field of corpses. The intense scent of blood instantly spread, symbolizing the arrival of the God of Death.

"Chief Divine protect us! Fight for the gods! Block them, don't let them escape!"

The shooting outside the camp gate continued, while louder cries of slaughter suddenly erupted near the trenches behind. White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte lay on the ground, suddenly turning back. In the faint firelight, he saw a large group of Mexica warriors, appearing like coyotes pouncing out of the dark, biting the tail of the long snake. The Mexica 'coyotes' revealed their sharp 'copper claws,' plunging the terrified Tlaxcala warriors into utter despair.

"God of the Hunt, we... we... are the hunted deer, falling into the Mexica's trap!"

White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte clenched his teeth, looking back and forth. He looked at the bodies of his fallen comrades beside him and the figures falling behind, his heart bleeding. These were the elite main forces of the city, and if they were all lost here, in White Snake City...

"Enough! Perhaps without these two thousand warriors, the city can hold out a bit longer!..."

Sarte lowered his eyes, a determination to die arising in his heart. Originally, White Snake Hill City had fifteen thousand people, including four thousand warriors, six thousand militia, and five thousand old, weak, women, and children, with food reserves for a year. After eight months of siege, less than eleven thousand remained, with over six months of food reserves left. The loss of these four thousand people, aside from the hundreds of warriors and militiamen who died in battle, mostly resulted from executing and sacrificing the old, weak, and children.

"Their taste... so sour and bitter, I don't want to taste it again..."

For the nobility in the city, slaughtering the humble moth citizens, or even executing their own slaves, carried no psychological burden. Doing so not only reduced the number of mouths to feed but also increased food reserves. Of course, this kind of food was usually allocated to the warriors. Similarly, if the Mexica drove the old and weak outside into the city, it wouldn't consume the city's food but rather supplement it. The cruelty of these war-torn times is unimaginable to the peaceful generations that followed.

"The city-state is the land beneath us, the Divine Descendants are the sky above us. And the ferocious Aztecs are the fire burning from the west! Now the land is covered with flames, the sky is filled with smoke and dust. I am in the abyss of despair; since I have been defeated, what more is there to say?... Only death, offered to the Divine!"

Amidst the bonfires, feathered arrows, and screams, White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte lowered his eyes, reciting his final dirge, though no one heard or recorded it. Then, he took a deep breath, discarded the greatbow from his back, gripped his shield and war club tightly, and let out a beastly roar, charging toward the camp in front!

"Whiz!... Thud! Thud thud!"

A feathered arrow came, blocked by the shield. Then more followed, still blocked by the battle-hardened White Snake Warrior Leader. He ran swiftly, reaching the camp gate in moments, raising the war club in his hand. However...

"Swish swish swish!..."

Over a dozen armored crossbowmen had their strings set, simultaneously aiming at the warrior before the camp gate. Then, pulling their triggers, over a dozen sharp crossbow arrows were released, striking White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte at a distance of merely a dozen steps!

"Thud!... Squelch! Squelch!"

White Snake Warrior Leader Sarte stood frozen, like a straw sack pierced through, a mask of suppressed agony and an inexplicable relief appearing on his face. The shield on his left arm was pierced by the close-range crossbow arrows, and four feathered arrows had deeply embedded in his right side, piercing into his chest and lungs.

"... Cough cough... Ugh... Haha!"

After the final coughing of blood and laughter, the White Snake Warrior Leader fell to the ground lying up. He gazed at the starry, moonlit night sky, eyes wide open, perishing in battle here. In his last moment before death, he had but one question, unwilling to know, yet knowing the answer.

"After my death, who will eat my wife and daughter left in White Snake City?"

The fighting outside White Snake City continued through the night. The flickering firelight and boiling cries of anguish and shouts also lasted through the night. City Lord Tizat of White Snake City stood atop the city wall, anxiously gazing outwards. His heart gradually sank, sinking into endless darkness, much like a nightmare and future already predestined.

### Chapter 1026: Assassination and Night Raid, the Long Siege\_3

As the morning sun rose, thousands of ruthless Mexica Warriors surged out of the camp like a tide, heading straight to the base of White Snake City. They wore Copper Armor, Copper Helmets, stained with blood, striding coldly forward, throwing one White Snake Warrior's head after another at the base of the city. Soon, nearly two thousand heads formed a small hill, silently displayed before the warriors atop the city walls.

On top of White Snake City, the Samurai and the Militia were dead silent. Even though they stood on one of the most impregnable strongholds in the world, it could not offer them any safety or assurance. This City-State, without reinforcements and unable to break through, no longer had any hope of changing its fate.

Soon, a Royal Banner with a Black Wolf emblem made its way from behind the thousands of Mexica Warriors, rising high in the gaze of tens of thousands of people.

Xiulote, wearing a Wolf Head helmet, donned in Bronze Heavy Armor, gripped a massive Bamboo-Wood Composite Bow in his hand. This exceptional Greatbow, meticulously crafted over several years by the bowyer Kundili from the Capital City Qin Congcan, represented the Kingdom's latest military engineering achievement and had only arrived here last month. The range of this Greatbow exceeded that of the existing Longbows.

Then, Xiulote stepped forward a few paces, stood outside White Snake City under the Escort of his trusted Aides, and gazed at the Tlaxcala Leader atop the city walls. After a moment, he raised the Greatbow, pulled it back with all his Force, and fired an arrow at the city walls!

"Swoosh!"

The fierce arrow flew in, striking the base of the city wall of Hill City under the shocked and surprised eyes of the White Snake City Lord Tizat.

Xiulote's old face flushed red, luckily concealed by his helmet. He once again extended his hand, made a throat-cutting gesture of death before the White Snake City Lord Tizat, and then, indifferent to the other's reaction, turned and walked away.

"Damn it!"

Seeing this scene, the eyes of the White Snake City Lord Tizat turned red instantly. He was like a desperate gambler who had bet everything, only to discover that his opponent across the table had cheated! Then, he lost all hope of a comeback, mocked by the enemy as they declared his inevitable death.

"...that damned Sarte, couldn't even recognize the trap, truly useless!"

The White Snake City Lord Tizat gritted his teeth and watched the Royal Banner of the Black Wolf once again disappear into the distance. Meanwhile, the Mexica Warriors tightened the siege trenches, cutting off all roads. The sacrificial hill formed from two thousand heads stood in silent vigil, as if issuing an invitation, beckoning the warriors to their final doom.

"Oh God of the Hunt! I will offer sacrifices to you! Please protect your devout Divine Descendants!"

After the fury passed, profound despair descended upon his heart. Soon after, despair shifted into devoutness, turning into a final frenzy. The White Snake City Lord Tizat prayed for a moment, then with reddened eyes, turned to the family warriors on both sides and sternly ordered.

"Have the Priests conduct the rituals and select five hundred Sacrifices to offer to the supreme Divine!...After the Divine has partaken, let the Samurai share in the god's gift!"

Using the most sacred language to speak the bloodiest words, this was the inheritance of the Cloud Serpent Divine Descendant. After speaking, Tizat descended from the city wall and made his way to the Temple at the center of the city. But soon, he remembered something, turned his head, and spoke slowly.

"Warrior Leader Sarte failed in the night raid, headed to the Divine Kingdom. Consider his wife and daughters among this batch of Sacrifices, to be offered to the god!... "

The morning sun set into an evening sun, as the fervent and chaotic sacrificial ceremony unfolded once more in the city. The Priests frantically chanted, danced, and sacrificed fresh and humble lives. Samurai and Militia prostrated in prayer, begging for the protection of the God of the Hunt, calling for a miracle that had never appeared. And as night fell, a more brutal scene was shrouded in the depth of darkness.

White Snake City's solid tower stood atop a plateau several tens of meters high. The failed night raid further weakened the strength of the Defending Army within the city. However, the Mexica seemed not to intend a full frontal assault. The prolonged siege continued and those still alive within the city struggled hopelessly, falling into the sinful Abyss.

#### Chapter 1027: Black Wolf's Request, an Unexpected Discovery!

The sun sets and the moon rises, and in the blink of an eye, another two days have passed. The round moon ascends to the middle of the sky, its light falling like water. The northern high mountains, the fortresses on the mountains, the southern long river, the boats on the river... and the sprawling Mexica army camps in between, all lie silent under the moonlit night, temporarily hiding the cruel slaughter and bloodshed in peace.

As the night deepens, Xiulote sits cross-legged in the main tent of the camp. Beside him is the Guard Commander Ecatl, who is responsible for grinding ink, but Nashu is nowhere to be seen.

"Such a strange little vixen! Two months ago, she was flirting in every possible way, but these past two months, she's been all sneaky and elusive..."

Xiulote glanced at the loyal and steadfast Guard Commander by his side, feeling inexplicably a bit of complaint.

Three months ago, after that night of "painting the world," he and Nashu had several playful indulgences, finding some pleasure in it. However, lately, Nashu seemed strange, often claiming she didn't feel well and going to bed early at night. Xiulote was somewhat indulgent towards her, worried she might be ill, and thus allowed her. However, this meant that at night, instead of a graceful red-sleeved figure grinding the ink, it was a strong samurai.



The samurai stood guarding solemnly, silent and still. The blood at the entrance of the main tent had already been cleaned away. During this time, in order to command the legion nearby, Xiulote didn't continue to reside in the comfortable temple, but took rest in the camp. At this moment, the high bright moon cast its light through the top of the tent, while the flickering bonfire in the corner illuminated the map and letter in the King's hand.

"My exalted Wolf King, the Guajili Legion listens entirely to you! We are in the forest of the East, persuading surrender from the fleeing Tlaxcala Tribes. We have been drilling through the forest all day, though it's exhausting, we've already gathered ten thousand, transporting them to Water Valley City in the South..."

Xiulote glanced at Black Wolf's scrawled letter, a smile appearing at the corner of his mouth. He reached out to unfold the latest Kingdom Documents while also reviewing the reports from the two southern counties.

By February, the agricultural settlement camp in Water Valley City to the south had transferred out another forty thousand able-bodied men, leaving it nearly empty. In the camps stretching over ten miles, only one thousand young Mistec captives remained. Meanwhile, the Kingdom of the Lake at the Long River's lower reaches, after "swallowing" two hundred twenty thousand young and strong members of various tribes in a year, was experiencing a grain shortage and a period of adjustment. Before the autumn harvest, the two southern counties could no longer accommodate more immigrants or agricultural slaves.

According to Xiulote's directive, the two southern counties are currently crafting a large number of bronze and iron farming tools to prepare ahead for the crucial spring plowing three months later. Large copper deposits also exist to the north of Zicao County, all part of the extensive Qinganbate copper belt. These dispersed copper mines, being developed by the veteran general Etalik, are undergoing small-scale extraction and smelting nearby. Even with the risk of technology diffusion, bronze blast furnaces are being promoted in the southern craftsmen's institutes to maximize production capacity.

As for the iron ore of Black Rock Mountain, iron production has started in the blast furnaces. The amount of iron produced is substantial, but the quality is low, mostly used for crafting farming tools. The iron tools produced in the first year will be prioritized for the Mexica and Prepetcha villages, which are the Kingdom's pillars. The expensive bronze tools, as per tradition, will be managed by the Priest of the Chief Divine and lent out to devout villagers. Manure collected in the villages will likewise be distributed by the Priest.

Under the Kingdom's governance system, the sincerity of one's faith will have tangible benefits and considerations, promoting the spread of faith as swiftly as possible!

Currently, the two southern counties of the Kingdom are striving to maintain stability and diligently cultivate lake fields, prioritizing agriculture above all. Only after an autumn harvest with basic yields can the tens of thousands of transferred captive immigrants feel a bit more at ease. The grain produced in the two southern counties, post-harvest, should achieve self-sufficiency. Expanding for two more years will certainly result in explosive growth.

The fertile Apa Plain, in the Kingdom's strategy, is a land blessed by heaven, a land of fish and rice. When the development of the two southern counties is sufficiently prosperous, it will steadily provide large quantities of grain! This also means the Kingdom Legion's field of operation can rely on the Tarsas River to sweep across a thousand miles, east to west and beyond, reaching even further!

Thinking of this, Xiulote stretched out his fingers, tracing the western part of the world map. At this moment, a small fleet of the Kingdom, by his command, should already be setting off from the Tarsas River estuary at the burgeoning Trout Town, heading for the northern coast.

This fleet is not large, consisting of about thirty catamaran canoes and over four hundred people, half samurai and half sailors. They will once again travel along the path of the Kingdom's first recorded expedition. Their tasks are twofold: to scout the details of the Northern Ticos tribes, presenting gemstone gifts to the local chief, then landing to explore and prepare for future conquests. Secondly, to make contact with the distant northern Yaolem group, known for producing gold and copper, and the Yoeme Tribe, known for producing coal and gold, conducting limited trade.

"The Kingdom does not lack gold or copper, but quality anthracite coal..."

Thinking of the various minerals around Lower California Bay, Xiulote's eyes sparkled, silently swallowing hard. The Kingdom's craftsmen, after a trial burn of samples brought back by the old militia, were astounded by the quality of this coal!

This quality anthracite coal has excellent heat output and lacks the sulfur issues found in the Celestial Empire's coal mines, making it an excellent fuel for iron smelting. Since Black Rock Mountain iron ore is also by the sea, transportation by water is conveniently accessible. It's just the distance...

## Chapter 1028: Black Wolf's Request, An Unexpected Discovery!\_2

"Sailing along the coast, three thousand and two hundred li, equivalent to sailing from the Capital Region of the Ming Dynasty to Quanzhou!... And if it's only three hundred and twenty li, then the Warriors of the Kingdom will set out to attack in an instant..."

Xiulote sighed in his heart. Such a distant mileage, with the Kingdom's current level of navigation, it would be difficult to conduct large-scale trade or send troops for conquest in the short term. However, the bay of Lower California has outer islands that provide shelter, making the waters calm; even a double-hulled canoe can manage to travel back and forth. Thus, small scale exchanges between the North and South are still possible.

Of course, when the kingdom's merchant ships head north, there is also a third original purpose, which is to bring back guano rock from the sea islands. The previous samples brought back by the old militia were too few, making it difficult to understand either in the attempts to make saltpeter or in enriching the fields.

"The islands of Lower California receive very little rainfall, and the guano rock on the islands should be a mixture of calcium phosphate and nitrate. The technology of making saltpeter from guano rock may take several years to explore. But grinding it and adding it to the fields is quite easy. If we could create sand ships like those of the Celestial Empire, to transport three or four hundred tons in one trip... added to the fields, it would mean tangible food! With enough fertilizer, given the climate of Central America, the Milpa can be productive like the Chinampa and yield three harvests a year or even more!"

Xiulote looked at the sea chart of the Northwest, contemplating for a moment, feeling restless inside. He then glanced toward the unknown South, thinking of the bird guano in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, which is an almost endless wealth.

"No, for the future Empire, endless food is more important than endless gold and silver! And all this must come from the sea, from the vast North-South Continent!"

Upon reaching this thought, Xiulote lowered his gaze, a thought flashing in his mind. To break through in maritime technology, he has to passively wait. Then, he once again read Black Wolf's letter, soon reaching the end.

"Your Highness, the Kingdom Legion in the East is recruiting and providing food to the Tlaxcala Tribes in the mountains, also spreading the faith of the Chief Divine. But last year, many tribes fled to the lands of

the Totonac, absorbed by those Great Tribes, big villages, and even City-States. The Totonac in the East took many Tlaxcala tribes as agricultural slaves. Even the nearby Five Mountains City sent out large groups of Totonac Warriors to block our Kingdom Legion's recruitment and attack our squads! The Guajili Warriors are very angry..."

"Hmm?"

Seeing this, Xiulote paused slightly, showing surprise.

"The mighty alliance of the Four States of Tlaxcala was destroyed under the alliance's eastern campaign. Now, six Mexica legions in the North and South are gathered in the Tlaxcala Valley, and the Totonac in the East dare to provoke the alliance at this time?"

Thinking this, Xiulote pondered for a moment, curling his lips. He continued to read, unsurprised by the following content.

"Your Highness, your loyal Black Wolf requests. The Totonac villages in the East provoked the alliance, provoked the Kingdom, offended the Chief Divine... They blocked the Kingdom's recruitment of Tlaxcala people, and they have many able-bodied men. Their warriors have fought with the legion's scouts several times, killing dozens of Kingdom Warriors!... I sincerely request your permission to deploy the entire legion to severely punish these daring Totonac!"

Seeing the Totonac already in combat with the alliance, Xiulote frowned and cursed under his breath.

"Oh, you warmongering Black Wolf!... When you return, I will punish you by making you copy the Chief Divine's 'Book of Ama Colley' ten times!"

Then, Xiulote's expression changed, thinking about the pros and cons. Soon, his gaze became sharp and resolute, his strong ambition jumping in his chest, carrying the desire to dominate and plunder, always yearning for further growth and strength.

"The King instructed me to besiege the city. This prolonged siege may continue for a long time, perhaps until the next autumn harvest. The alliance's food supply is not plenty, and transportation takes a toll.

Last year, the great army gathered a lot by cultivating the land, so it's unnecessary to entrust all critical logistics to others."

"This year can continue cultivating the land. But in these two months, only ten thousand old and weak Tlaxcala have been recruited. Outside the barracks of Water Valley City, there are fifty thousand acres of ripe fields, enough to sustain a hundred thousand people cultivating!"

"The Totonac have already offended the alliance and are battling the Kingdom Legion. Regardless of the cause, to maintain the alliance's dignity, they must be beaten into seeking peace!... Moreover, the Kingdom needs population! More population, more agricultural slaves, to feed more warriors, which means a stronger army!"

After pondering, Xiulote finally made up his mind. He has fully recognized that the military group he established is a pure war machine.

For such a united and rapidly expanding military group, it needs to continuously plunder ample nutrients from the soil of all tribes. Maintaining a peaceful and stable relationship with the Totonac does not hold much significance. Instead, within the framework of the Mexica Alliance, attacking, plundering, and annexing at will is the fastest way to grow stronger!

"Black Wolf, the Totonac have offended the Chief Divine, I permit you to inflict severe punishment on them! I will also write to King Aweit, reporting details of the Totonac..."

Xiulote picked up the pen, dipped it in blue ink, and wrote a letter that seemed to be tinged with red.

"There are three months left until this year's spring planting. The Kingdom needs the population to cultivate, and also needs women to give birth. The Guajili Legion can act freely, but do not engage in unnecessary killing!... White Snake Hill City has no ability to break out. I will send eight thousand 'Yu Yan' legion to help you transport captives and protect the flank. As for the Five Mountains City that took the initiative to send troops..."

Writing here, Xiulote paused slightly. His gaze flickered as he coldly wrote the last sentence.

"You first send people to scout the city's population and defenses. The Kingdom's fleet has just brought a new batch of gunpowder and Clay Tribulus. The high city walls and steep terrain of Cloud Serpent Mountain City and White Snake Hill City are not conducive to the power of cannons... If the time is right, I will dispatch the Imperial Guard Legion's Artillery Camp to go to the Five Mountains City..."

The rainy season in Central America is too prolonged, and the rainfall in the Tlaxcala Valley is too much, the moisture in the air is overly rich. The gunpowder carried by the Southern Army last year mostly became ineffective after the long rainy season. Similarly, during the rainy season, the Kingdom's gunpowder production also halted, everything must await the end of the rain.

Until yesterday, the latest batch of gunpowder was finally painstakingly transported under the Tree Snake City by the Kingdom's fleet. Along with the gunpowder came a letter from the Vice Director of the Divine Revelation Place, Talaya.

Thinking of the lonely figure standing there, Xiulote pressed his lips lightly, not knowing what he was thinking. A moment later, he finally reached out, unfolding the letter with a faint floral scent.

The letter had a flower pattern like the sun, and inside it were two flowers of mimosa. In this era, mimosa is considered a spiritual plant because it moves when touched. In legends, the soul of a maiden is sealed in the grass and can only be seen by the one who misses her when the flower blooms.

As a Priest, Xiulote naturally knew this legend. He lowered his gaze, with a complex expression, reading the distant maiden's correspondence.

"To my Sun God... Victorious in the Eastern Campaign, your loyal... servant, kneels in celebration for you and prays for you to the Chief Divine!... According to your decree, the Kingdom's Gunpowder Bureau has discovered several bat caves and started refining saltpeter from the bat dung in these caves. The Kingdom's gunpowder production has increased once again. Every month outside of the rainy season, more than ten thousand pounds can be produced... The new batch of gunpowder weapons will arrive with this letter and the same quantity will be shipped every month before the heavy rains of June..."

Holding the letter and smelling its faint scent, Xiulote's heart inexplicably softened. Talaya has been responsible for the Divine Revelation Place for him, working diligently, overseeing the research and production of gunpowder, and four years have passed in a blink... After a moment, Xiulote steadied his mind and continued to read on. However, he quickly became sharp-eyed, suddenly standing up!

"...Blessed by the Chief Divine! The rain of the rainy season is the enlightenment of the Chief Divine, the transport along the river brought a new discovery... My lord, after hard exploration, I finally found a way to double the power of gunpowder!"

Chapter 1029: The Luxurious Life of the Great Nobility, Improved Gunpowder with Doubled Force!

"Ecatl, light a refreshing divine smoke with no random herbs added. And bring some herb snacks, along with a cup of green grass cocoa tea!"

"Yes, Family Head!"

The bright moon hung high, and the royal tent was solemn. Xiulote, holding the letter paper, turned his head slightly and gave a command to the Guard Commander holding an axe on guard. Then, he closed his eyes, rubbed his temples, and patiently waited.

Soon, the fragrant aroma of tobacco rose from the purple clay smoking furnace, dispersing inside the well-ventilated tent. These whole tobacco leaves came from the Maya City-States, of very high quality. As they burned, a faint oil would seep from the surface of the dried leaves, giving the aroma a particularly rich flavor.

Xiulote took a deep breath, feeling the floral scent in the smoke, alongside a slight sweetness, instantly invigorating his spirit. Having served as a High Priest for many years and frequently holding ceremonial rituals, he had gained a keen sense and understanding of the quality of divine smoke.

"Hmm, it must be tobacco from Tabasco. After a simple fermentation, it has lost some of its astringency and bitterness. Oh! It's carrying the flavors of almonds and raisins, indicating it's been aged for several more years... It's well-matured, and even has a floral fragrance!..."

Xiulote closed his eyes, holding a mouthful of rich smoke. He held his breath, savoring it for a while, and then exhaled the smoke. The aroma of this tobacco was entirely different from the paper cigarettes of later times. Xiulote found it hard to describe, but intuitively, it might be more like the cigars he had heard about, here burning boxed.

After a moment of relaxation, Xiulote's weary mind finally became active. Ecatl also returned with a plate of herb snacks and a pot of green grass cocoa tea, striding powerfully.

This plate of herb snacks was something Xiulote instructed the chef to invent specifically to improve life. It involved grinding aged vanilla beans into true vanilla powder. The vanilla powder was then mixed with honey, cornmeal, and turkey eggs, fermented, and finally baked.

Simply put, it was "vanilla honey cornmeal cake." Once the expensive vanilla powder was added, it became a unique and precious delicacy of this era in America. The taste of natural vanilla powder, a single bite...

"Excellent! The natural fragrance is lasting and incomparable to artificial vanillin!"

Xiulote nodded in satisfaction, eating two pieces of vanilla cake in succession. However, despite its deliciousness, vanilla was rare in production. Even in its native land, Mexico, vanilla remained expensive. The natural pollination probability of the plant was only about one-tenth, requiring the unique bees of Central America for pollination.

Thus, historically, it wasn't until 1841 that a slave named Edmond from Réunion Island discovered a method of artificial pollination for vanilla. From that point forward, through artificial pollination, vanilla could finally propagate normally beyond Mexico, greatly increasing its yield. In the following decades, vanilla gradually transitioned from a royal tribute as valuable as gold to a delicacy consumed by the ordinary nobility and great merchants. As for the common people's consumption, it would take another century.

"Hmm... Even just to eat more vanilla cake, I must teach the Alliance the artificial pollination method to increase the pod rate of vanilla several times! Of course, this method should first be offered as tribute to King Aweit, who owns most of the Chinampas, and the High Priesthood of the Capital City..."

Xiulote pondered for a moment, noting this matter down. Then, he picked up a slightly warm cup of green grass cocoa tea, taking several large gulps, feeling instantly refreshed throughout his body.

The Alliance's green grass tea had a strange name yet was a drink that many in later generations had tasted. It was made with Mexican sarsaparilla, known as "sarsaparilla" in the future—an herbal drink originally created by American Natives, mainly used for a cooling effect in summer, as well as treating colds, rheumatism, gout, and fever.



The natives of Brazil had a more intense flavor. They added the stimulating Brazilian cocoa (guarana) to the green grass tea as a stimulant drink. As for Xiulote, he preferred adding a little cocoa to the green grass tea to refresh his mind.

"Cigar divine smoke, herb snacks, green grass cocoa tea... This is the luxurious life of the Great Nobility of Mexica!..."

Xiulote laughed at himself with a hint of self-mockery. Then, he finally picked up the letter from Talaya once more, concentrating fully as he drew and noted down potential new gunpowder improvements.

"My esteemed Highness... After obtaining saltpeter, sulfur, and charcoal, the craftsmen need to weigh and proportion them. According to my experiments over the past few years, approximately at a ratio of 5:1:1, the clay tribulus explodes most stably and with the greatest power. This ratio is easier to manage than the 15:2:3 that you've calculated. Of course, if it's to create poisonous smoke, you can increase the proportion of sulfur. Whereas for the gunpowder arrows intended for setting fires, not as much saltpeter is needed..."

Seeing this ratio, Xiulote contemplated for a moment before nodding in satisfaction. The Alliance's technique for refining sulfur was limited, necessitating the use of more service. Silently, he gave Talaya a thumbs-up, eager to read onward.

"...After mixing, the three ingredients need to be thoroughly combined in a clay mortar, ground slowly with a clay pestle. From this point on, craftsmen must be extremely cautious, allowing no open flames near... When the gunpowder is fully ground into a powder, it must be sealed in large clay jars as per your instructions, with the seal wrapped in a circle of rubber."

"...Since the eastern expedition, the kingdom's gunpowder transportation has been done via waterways and has experienced rainy seasons. If exposed to rain, the gunpowder loses its effectiveness. You had reminded me before of the reason: the solubility of saltpeter in water, washed away by the water."

"Last year's rainy season was very wet, and some gunpowder in large clay jars, improperly sealed, became damp during transport. After discovering the issue, the craftsmen brought them back to the kingdom. However, the dampness in these jars wasn't severe, and the saltpeter inside hadn't been fully washed away by the rain."

"By the end of last autumn, after the rainy season, the craftsmen and I distributed this batch of gunpowder into clay boxes, carefully dried them. When dried, some of the powdered gunpowder formed into small pellets. I loaded some clay tribulus with this gunpowder, originally intending to test if it was still usable. Unexpectedly, trouble ensued! The power of the gunpowder was extraordinarily great, the broken clay fragments even pierced through the blocking bag and cut my cheek..."

"What?!"

On seeing this, Xiulote suddenly stood up. He recalled Talaya's graceful face, suddenly tightening in his heart. A moment later, he took a deep breath and continued reading.

"My Highness, my Sun God... I did not embarrass you; I finally discovered a way to improve gunpowder!..."

However, Talaya's letter barely mentioned the injury. Her handwriting was light and soaring, with excitement almost emanating from the page.

"Highness! By merely adding water and then drying into pellets, the potency of the gunpowder increases significantly! I would never deceive you; it truly can increase once, or even more than that!..."

"Initially, I couldn't believe it, and I conducted numerous experiments. The power is indeed overwhelming and I almost injured myself again... adding water while slowly mixing, as long as the gunpowder presents a thick claylike texture, it's blended well! The ratio of water added ranges from one part in twenty to one part in ten!"

"When the water has been added, the gunpowder coagulates into pellet form. At this stage, using a clay sieve, we divide the gunpowder balls into many parts and small granules. Finally, they are set to dry on grass paper, retaining their granular form, with a potency like the thunderbolts in the Chief Divine's hands! ...My Sun God, I want to kneel on the ground and offer the thunderbolts to you..."

Upon reading this, Xiulote pursed his lips. His expression shifted, from worry to joy, moving through amazement to a sense of sudden understanding.

"So that's it! ...Add water, dry, form into granules... this, this is the granulation of black powder! This marks a qualitative change in gunpowder, akin to the secret formula that appeared on European battlefields in the early years of this century!"

"...With granulated black powder, even gaps are maintained to fully retain oxygen's inclusion, facilitating flame spread and gunpowder combustion! In other words, it greatly enhances the combustion efficiency of gunpowder, unlike powder that fails to fully combust. The multiplied increase in combustion efficiency effectively results in a multiplied increase in gunpowder power!"

"Henceforth, the firing of the kingdom's cannons will stabilize, eliminating the need for superb gunpowder loading techniques. After granulation, gunpowder also won't separate into layers of sulfur powder, charcoal powder, and saltpeter powder due to the jostling of long-distance transport, eliminating the need for remixing before battles... and establishing one of the technical foundations for the heavy musket!"

In the curling divine smoke, Xiulote wrote vigorously, jotting down each thought as it emerged. A moment later, he was left with one final thought, raising his pen but unable to put it down.

"Talaya, my loyal one... for your contributions and efforts over these years, how should I reward you?"

The divine smoke slowly burned out, rising to the top of the tent and drifting towards the bright moon. The king lowered his gaze, setting down paper and pen. A full moon illuminated his heart, flickering for a long while before settling into the depths of his heart's lake, hidden amidst the dust and smoke.

#### Chapter 1030: The Heart of the Fox, Technological Breakthrough at the Divine Revelation Place

The morning sun rose from the edge of the sky, and a faint light floated across the fields. The crisp sound of wooden blades clashing rang outside the royal tent, clear and distinct. This was the dawn training, lasting for a full three quarters until the daylight brightened, announcing its end.

The Guard Commander, Ecatl, appeared calm, with a slight sweat. Xiulote was bare-chested, drenched in sweat. Under Nashu's service, he happily wiped his body with hot water and breathed out a long, comfortable sigh.

"Phew!... Haha! Daily persistent training is the key for strong Samurais to maintain willpower and physique!"

Xiulote said with a laugh, patting his muscular chest. Then, he extended his large hand, affectionately pinching Nashu's cheek.

"Ah? Your Highness..."

"Call me Master! Nashu, my little fox, is your health better now?"

"Ah! Your... Master... I'm better now..."

Nashu's ears turned red, and she lowered her head, nervously stammering. This shy and restless posture appeared on her usually confident and grand demeanor, creating a kind of enticing contrast.

"Hmm? A bit warm, is it a fever?"

Xiulote reached out his hand, touching Nashu's fair neck and then her flushed ears. Nashu immediately stiffened, like a puppet, allowing her master to manipulate her. The master thought for a moment, then embraced the maid's head, placing his forehead on hers, the heat even more evident.

"Oh? Extremely hot!... Forget it, life in the military camp is always tough. Nashu, you'd better stop serving me. Go to Tree Snake City and rest for a few days."

"Ah! Master, I'm fine... I'm just..."

Nashu parted her lips slightly, nervously hesitated to speak. In her heart, there was a warm flame, ignited by His Highness himself. She could feel His Highness's sincere feelings, far surpassing the attitude of the Great Nobility towards servants, completely different from the indifference of the Elder Priests.

In His Highness's eyes, she seemed not to be just a shadow slave without self, not a plaything to please the master, but a truly complete woman. These wonderful feelings were the first she had experienced since birth, and all of this slowly gave her courage over the years, leading to a gradually budding self-awareness. She was slowly struggling within the identity of a shadow slave, developing a desire, a natural desire as a woman.

However, these feelings and desires were like seeds tightly bound by the rigid soil of doctrines ingrained since childhood in the Temple. Yet, last summer, when the corpse of the High Priest's divinity suddenly appeared before her, amidst incredible shock and confusion, sorrows for His Highness followed... she finally broke free from the bonds of her heart, desires sprouting like seeds, uncontrollable.

For the mountain-like High Priest who controlled the Holy City's faction had departed. Her destiny was no longer decided by those ruthless mountains but held in the hands of His Highness like the deep and warm sea... no, the master's hands.

"Your Highness... I'm just..."

"You just have a small cold. You need rest!"

Xiulote shook his head, gently stroking Nashu's smooth cheek. Watching the stubborn little fox open her mouth, he directly extended a finger, pressing against her mouth. Then his expression turned serious, issuing an order.

"Nashu, I command you to go to Tree Snake City and rest well. Remember to drink two cups of healing green tea every day, and rest assured! As for the escort in the tent, I'll temporarily hand it over to Ecatl. Once you're well, come back and take over."

Nashu widened her eyes, gazing at Xiulote's serious face. For some reason, mist gradually covered her eyes, her legs slightly weak. After a moment, she suddenly extended her tongue, took in Xiulote's finger, and gently licked and bit twice like a small kitten.

"Hiss!"

Feeling the moisture and softness at his fingertips, Xiulote shuddered, flames rising in his heart. He immediately withdrew his finger, feigning anger.

"Nashu!"

"Master..."

Nashu licked her lips, lowered her head. She exposed her white, reddened neck, obediently responding, like a silver fox falling into the Hunter's hands, ready for disposal.

"I... will obey you!"

After the tender and brief interlude, Xiulote once again sat in the main tent, reviewing the letters from each department at the Divine Revelation Place.

First was the report from Director Kushinji of the Military Equipment Bureau. The warehouse in the Capital City had accumulated another batch of crossbows, axe and shield, and leather and copper armor over the past two months, enough to equip two Thousand-man Camps.

"The battle against the Totonac people has already erupted, it's time to replenish a batch of equipment..."

Xiulote thought for a moment, ordering this batch of military supplies to be sent to the eastern front as reserves for the army. As the army marches and the battles intensify, the damage and consumption of equipment increase rapidly. Although the accompanying Craftsmen can repair some, the remaining gap must be filled with new equipment, with arrowheads and armor replenishment being the most urgent. Therefore, with the current military production capacity of both the Mexica Alliance and the Kingdom of the Lake, they can only sustain one copper armor legion.

Next was the letter from Director Kundili of the Crossbow Bureau, still discussing the new Bamboo-Wood Composite Bow. The Bamboo-Wood Composite Bow technology of the Crossbow Bureau finally had a breakthrough. A new batch of over a thousand composite bows is in production, possibly taking another year to complete.

The Kingdom's new Bamboo-Wood Bow differs from the traditional Huaxia Bamboo-Wood bows where the upper and lower limbs are joined. It uses a whole Longbow as the bow's core, carefully gluing bamboo strips onto the back with bone glue, further increasing shooting power and efficiency. The ends of the bow have three layers of bamboo planks, creating a recurve, improving arrow initial speed.

Advancement in crossbow craftsmanship isn't achieved overnight. Just making one composite bow requires years, not to mention improving techniques. This bow's improvement is simple but demands tremendous strength, unsuitable for anyone but true warriors in battle.

"Compared to Eurasia's millennia-old bow-making technology, emerging gunpowder weapons are better suited for various American tribes to pursue!"

Xiulote gradually gained insight, quickly scanning other departments' reports.

The Mining and Metallurgy Bureau brought in thousands of mining slaves, expanding in scale, and production capacity is improving. They also started using some iron tools in mines. But compared to Bronze Tools, new ironware hasn't shown its advantages.

The Manufacturing Department produced superior purple pottery, began experimenting with adding bone powder during firing following divine guidance. The Construction Bureau expanded in scale, attempting large-scale continuous firing kilns with simple brick-making tools as per divine guidance.

The Printing Bureau experimented with flexible metal type printing, primarily using lead and tin. This exploration of movable type printing under divine guidance is mainly for technical reserves. The printing bureau's primary task remains tirelessly carving scriptures and illustrations the Chief Divine, transporting them to southern and northern counties and village sacrificial altars.

After years of silence, the Special Trade Bureau's director, the stone mason leader Losano, finally had new developments. Regrettably, despite nearly ten years of research, he still hasn't created transparent glass. However, from the Black Rock Mountain iron mine, he ordered a high-temperature-resistant iron tube. Following His Highness's hint from many years ago, he inserted one end of the iron tube into molten glass, playing at glassblowing.

"Hmm?..."

Xiulote raised his eyebrows, contemplating the small glazed bottle accompanied by the letter, silent. The glazing bottle cost next to nothing to make; however, much effort went into the Sun Hummingbird motif adorning it. Such ornate vessels compared to practical pottery boast the advantage of...

"Good, it can be sold at a high price! We'll call it... Lake Gem Vessel!"

Xiulote nodded slightly, confirming another monopoly high-margin product for the Kingdom. Then, he finally extended his hand, opening the letter from the Bronze and Cannon Casting Bureau head, Master Caster Tilipi. However, after reading for a moment, the King's expression drastically changed, revealing unchecked joy!

"Honored Your Majesty! Following the divine revelation you left, we've spent over a year trialing a type of bronze mortar cannon specifically designed for siege warfare. It has an exceptionally unique design, short and stout, with a wide caliber capable of launching heavy stone projectiles weighing a full 30 pounds!..."

"It's a divine artifact bestowed by the Chief Divine, capable of destroying any fortress! We've test-fired it multiple times, its power so great it can even breach stone walls! May the divine bless Your Majesty! From now on, no castle or fortress can hinder your path!"

"However... the last test firing, we used granular new gunpowder, loaded full fifteen pounds, launching a densely sealed 30-pound stone round... and... the cannon exploded!..."