

Civilization 1051

Chapter 1051: The Second Kingdom Exploration, Ancient Myth, Magnificent Maya Epic!_3

Tikalo gritted his teeth and revealed the answer.

"In Maya mythology, the squirrel with a beard is the serpent of divinity! And in that era, Hunac Ceel was considered to be the incarnation of the Feathered Serpent Divine! This means that Divine Descendant Kekum is the son of the serpent god with prophetic abilities, born to lead the Maya people to establish a new kingdom!"

"Divine Descendant Kekum displayed miracles and declared the divine name! His deeds spread among the northern Maya tribes and he became a revered hero of the Maya people. The nobility and samurai of the Maya city-states respected his divinity and rallied under his banner!... The city-states joined hands and fought against the rulers of Chichen Itza for many years, finally overthrowing the rule of Chichen Itza two hundred and seventy years ago, establishing a new kingdom!"

Upon saying this, a glow of reverence appeared in the eyes of Maya merchant Tikalo.

"Heroic Divine Descendant Kekum led the Maya Nobles from various city-states to overthrow Chichen Itza and reestablish the capital in Mayapan (Mayapan)! Mayapan is a historic holy city, an ancient city built by us Mayans during the Golden Age, and unrelated to the Toltec people..."

"From then on, Mayapan was the Land of Gods, the capital of the city-states, 'the model and norm of the Maya people', an immortal Divine City! And Heroic Divine Descendant Kekum also, in the temple of Mayapan, under the worship of countless divine descendants and nobility, became the 'King of the Maya'! The Serpent Divine Descendant's Kokom Family thus became the Royal Family of Mayapan, ruling the northern Maya tribes for two hundred and twenty years!"

"I see! The Serpent Divine Descendant is the Kokom Family in Mayapan!"

Puap suddenly realized. He grinned, revealing sharp teeth, and held a bronze axe in his hand.

"Tikalo, so as long as we go to Mayapan, can we find that Kekum royal family? Meet the Serpent Divine Descendants?"

"Hahaha!..."

Tikalo suddenly looked up and laughed, a bitter laughter lasting for a long time, even his eyes were somewhat moist. Then, under the puzzled glances of everyone, he shook his head and sighed.

"We Mayans all rever the royal family Kekum, viewing them as the true kings of the Maya tribes! However, forty-eight years ago, the leader of the Xiu Family, Apu Shu, led ten thousand warriors in a sudden rebellion against the Kekum Royal Family, attacked the capital city of Mayapan! He burned the capital for ten days with his family's warriors, and then set fire to destroy Mayapan. This was a premeditated revolt, and a despicable betrayal! All the Kekum Royal Family, all the Serpent Divine Descendants, were completely exterminated by the Xiu Family!"

"Thus, seven hundred miles north and south, and nine hundred miles east and west, the great Mayapan Kingdom was annihilated! The entire northern lowland Maya then split into sixteen clan chieftaincies, ruled by different divine descendant families. And the most venerable Serpent Divine Descendants, inherited from the Divine Capital Tikal lineage, completely vanished among the Maya tribes..."

"What! The Serpent Divine Descendants, no more?!"

Upon hearing this, Puap was shocked, his face changing colors, his whole body somewhat weak. Chiwaco again looked confused at Old Pu, pondered for a moment, then spoke.

"Tikalo, I remember you said before, besides that so-called divine capital, wasn't there also a Snake City, also of the Serpent Divine Descendants? Where did they go afterwards?... Like those with noble bloodlines, they are very persuasive. You Mayans seem to have a strong belief in noble bloodlines; certainly, they wouldn't be faring poorly!"

"Captain Chiwaco, you truly have the profound wisdom of a sea turtle."

Tikalo smiled, sincerely complimented him with a sentence. Then, he pursed his lips, secretly clenched his teeth, and finally smiled calmly.

"The Serpent Divine Descendants of the Snake City, closer to the northern lowlands, also managed to escape with more descendants and tribes during the divine disaster. They established rule in the city-

state of Uxmal (Uxmal), merging with the local ancient nobility. Subsequently, they bowed and scraped, cooperating with the rule of Chichen Itza, continuously developing and expanding. And in the latter years of Chichen Itza's rule, they also joined Hero Totom's army, participating in overthrowing the old dynasty, and became a powerful city-state leader in the new kingdom until its downfall... And their family is the Xiu (Xiu)!"

Chapter 1052: Second Kingdom Exploration, Maya Sixteen Clans, Who Are You?

The sunset hangs obliquely, falling into the clouds over the sea, reflecting layers of colorful haze. Tikalo stared blankly at the sky, as if seeing a three-thousand-year Maya epic unfolding in the sea of clouds, overflowing with colors.

Sunlight falls on the edge of the clouds, reflecting a golden outline, that is the splendor of the Golden Age. The light penetrates the clouds, revealing a deep red glow, that is the prosperity of the revival of Mayapan. When the light sinks into the depths, only pitch-black chasms remain, that is the darkness and despair of the destruction of the Kokom Family!

Now, the divine descendant child who was once desperate and a thousand miles from home has grown up and even grown old. Yet the hope he has been bitterly pursuing for forty years remains so dim, like a dark moon without light.

"This world will not have another hero Kokom blessed by the Divine."

Tikalo pursed his lips, hiding all his emotions deep within, transforming them into reckless hatred and courage.

"Mortals cannot pray for fate. They can only set aside everything, recklessly reaching for the hem of that fate... even if the price is death!"

The moist wind from the sea blows, stirring people's hems and hair. Everyone on the flagship is immersed in the story of the Eastern Maya, unable to extricate themselves for a long time. The golden age came and ended, heroes of divine lineage came and went, great kingdoms were founded and died. But now, on the lowlands of the Eastern Maya, only fragmented clans and chieftains remain.

"Of course, for alliances and kingdoms with ambition in the world, this is not necessarily a bad thing!"

Priest Tomate pondered for a moment, his eyes gleaming. He looked at the Maya merchants who would soon restore their composure and asked in a deep voice.

"Tikalo, you said the Xiu Family attacked and killed the Kokom Royal Family, causing the fall of the Mayapan Kingdom. But how could such a vast kingdom be destroyed so easily? Did the generals of Mayapan not retaliate against the Xiu Family? Such a grave crime as attacking the royal family, what benefit could it bring to the Xiu Family?...What exactly is the situation in the Eastern Maya lowlands now?"

Hearing this succession of questions, Tikalo showed a thoughtful expression. It was not surprising; the priests and generals of the kingdom all had ambitious designs. A fragmented Maya would surely be like alluring honey, attracting the covetous gaze of bears, as long as... that bear was close enough to reach.

"The vast Mayapan Kingdom was actually composed of a city-state alliance formed by hundreds of city-states scattered throughout Yucatan and the lowlands. Each Maya city-state was near a water source and spread across a land of seven hundred miles. In the difficult jungle paths, communication wasn't convenient, and the marching of large samurai teams was also hard. The majority of city-states in the alliance were self-governed by local divine descendant families. The immortal Mayapan was universally revered by the various states as their overlord! The divine Kokom royal family enjoyed the title of 'King of the Maya,' serving as the bond maintaining the entire alliance!"

Tikalo had once lost sleep for many nights over the demise of Mayapan, earnestly contemplating for many years. At this moment, he spoke calmly, with the demeanor of a sage.

"The Xiu Family from Uxmal was the most powerful city-state leader family near the Mayapan Capital City, controlling several large city-states and more than ten small villages. They gradually shifted their ruling focus from Uxmal to Mani two hundred years ago. This city-state was only fifty miles from Mayapan! With their revered bloodline and their immense strength, they participated heavily in the politics of the kingdom, being one of the most influential noble families in Mayapan... In other words, they were like the City of Texcoco once had been in relation to Tloquiditlan!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate seemed to come to a realization. So, this rebellious Xiu Family was indeed an influential prince close to the Capital City! Such strong rebels with malicious intent so close at hand were truly impossible to guard against, the only option was to strike proactively!

For the Maya people, they revered divine bloodlines passed down for thousands of years, with an almost unchanging hierarchy. They maintained extremely strict noble and humble ranks and possessed a far stronger nobility than even the alliance.

Many divine descendant families with a thousand-year lineage had very numerous family members, often controlling more than one city-state and simultaneously managing the divine authority and military power of the city-state. Therefore, the political structure among the Maya was the development of clan politics to the extreme, forming oligarchic or autocratic clan chieftains.

"The conflict between the Xiu Family and the Kokom Royal Family has a long history, with twists and turns that even go back to the Golden Age, the enmity between Divine Capital and Snake City. After the establishment of Mayapan, the Kokom royal family continuously expanded and centralized power. As the de facto divine descendant family closest to the Capital City, the Xiu Family had lost the most benefits. Although the Xiu Family outwardly showed respect and compliance, even intermarrying with the royal family for several generations, their dissatisfaction had always been brewing... It's a pity! There wasn't a ruthless elder in Mayapan to prematurely eliminate this hidden group of vipers!"

"The Xiu Family launched a surprise attack on Mayapan, killing the Kokom Royal Family and burning the Capital City. The entire city-state alliance thus lost its cohesive bond. With cumbersome jungle marches, unless there was coordination from city-states along the way to provide food and civilians, the conquering army couldn't proceed far. The royal family's fall was so swift; within ten days, the blood of over a thousand divine descendants and tens of thousands of commoners stained the Capital City, turning the great ball field into a blood lake! Under the brutal massacre by the Xiu Family, no esteemed Kokom prince could escape the Capital City to call for help from the states..."

Tikalo lowered his gaze, suppressing a somewhat choked voice. He bit his lip fiercely and then calmly continued.

"Therefore, in this sudden rebellion, besides the enemy- of-the-Xiu-Family, the similarly neighboring Canul Family to Mayapan, no other clan's reinforcements arrived in time. The royal family was completely annihilated, and the military leaders of the alliance dispersed all over. Losing their revered overlord, they based themselves on clans, seized territory as kings, and fought among themselves... Henceforth, the entire Mayapan Kingdom, from the eastern seaside to the western seaside, from the northern coast to the southern lowlands, split into sixteen assorted, differing strong clan chieftaincies!"

"Sixteen clan chieftaincies?"

Priest Tomate stroked his chin, contemplating this fragmented situation. So, among these chieftaincies, who was an enemy of the kingdom, who was a friend, or who was a temporarily alignable ally... Priest Tomate pondered slightly and then focused on Tikalo, asking seriously.

"Among these sixteen states, which clans are the strongest? Where on the Yucatan Peninsula do they occupy, and how many samurai do they command?"

Upon hearing this, Puap nodded heavily, speaking with a murderous aura.

"Yes! That Xiu Family and their Heavenly Serpent Bloodline, where exactly are they, and how many samurai do they have?"

"With the fall of Mayapan, the kingdom split into sixteen clans and sixteen states. The most powerful four clans are all concentrated in the northern part of Yucatan, where water is ample and the population is large. These four clans also dominate maritime trade on the Yucatan Peninsula, controlling the route to Feathered Serpent Long Island, possessing the most astounding wealth!"

Tikal's face was smiling, his words leisurely. He understood what His Highness Xiulote valued and knew what to say to entice the priests and Samurais of the Kingdom of the Lake.

"Along the coast of the peninsula from west to east, the four regions are: On the far west side of the peninsula, the third most powerful, Ah Canul clan based in Kapok City (Calkini); the central-west part of the peninsula, based in Mani City, occupying the Mayapan kingdom's territory, the most powerful Xiu Family; the central-east part of the peninsula, based in White Eagle City (Zaci), the second most powerful, with many vassals, the Kapul Family; and the far eastern side of the peninsula, centered around the holy land of Cozumel Yan Island, controlling the Feathered Serpent's Long Island sea route, the Ekab Alliance."

"The Ekab Alliance, controls Feathered Serpent Long Island's sea route?"

Upon hearing this, Chief God Priest Tomate was somewhat puzzled.

"Tikalo, the other three are clan chiefdoms, why is this Ekab an alliance?"

"Respected Chief God Priest, because the Ekab Alliance is formed by multiple families under the call of Yan Island in the holy land. Within the alliance, every family city-state's status is equal under the gaze of the Rain God."

"Equal status among the alliance? In such a structure... who makes decisions in major affairs?"

"Ha! Respected Chief God Priest, the status of each city-state is equal, but the holy land of Yan Island, which worships the Rain God, is naturally more equal than others!"

Tikalo's lips curled into a smile, carrying a hint of mockery.

"So, in major affairs, it is naturally the priest leader of the holy land who makes the decisions!"

Upon hearing this, Chief God Priest Tomate pondered for a moment, slowly nodded, seeming to understand.

"... The strength of the Xiu Family is the most powerful?"

Puap's expression showed uncertainty. After a moment, he steeled his heart and pursued further.

"Tikalo, how many Samurais exactly do these families have, how many civilians do they control?"

"I am just an ordinary Mayan merchant, how could I know the secrets of these clans?"

Hearing this anticipated question, the Mayan merchant blinked and replied with a smile.

"However, considering the prosperity of the Lowland Maya, plus the northern Yucatan Peninsula, and the former lands of the Mayapan kingdom, there must be at least one and a half million people!"

"One and a half million people! If thirty can form one Samurai, wouldn't that mean at least fifty thousand Samurais?!"

Upon hearing this, Puap was stunned. Such a large population was already close to the peak of the Kingdom of the Lake. And the Eastern Maya Lowland was about three thousand miles away from the Mexica Alliance, making it difficult to dispatch large forces!

"Fortunately, the large Mayapan has disintegrated, splitting into clan chiefdoms... In this case, even if one were to kill a noble Divine Descendant, one could escape to other chiefdoms."

Puap's expression changed, hints of murderous intent flickering.

"Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood can lift the Divine Eagle Curse!..."

The sunset fell, transforming into golden red hues on the horizon, catching the gaze of everyone, like a future full of unpredictability. Compared to the Maya clans and chiefdoms, the kingdom's exploratory fleet's strength was still not worth mentioning.

However, the kingdom fleet was merely a preliminary probe. Behind the kingdom fleet stood the powerful highland eagle, alongside the ambitious, divinely inspired Highness! Undoubtedly, it was a force capable of influencing the Yucatan Peninsula. And the attitude towards the various Maya clans upon first encounter was determined by those on the flagship!

The old militia Chiwaco had always watched coldly in silence. Only at this moment did he, with an icy face, gaze at Tikalo, and coldly asked.

"Tikalo, you cunning fox without fur, you're quite the schemer! You've said so much, but I only have one question... Who exactly are you?"

Chapter 1053: The Second Kingdom Exploration, A Sudden Invitation

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine, there is no falsehood! I am merely a Maya merchant without clan affiliation, wandering the world, taken in by His Highness!"

In front of everyone, Tikalo clutched the Sun Hummingbird Talisman at his neck and swore sincerely.

"I am loyal to His Highness! His Highness has never treated me poorly, granting me the rights to manage the kingdom's goods. His Highness, blessed by Divine Revelation, has promised me that when the army marches east in the future, I may become a revered noble lord in the Maya Lands... Witnessed by the Chief Divine! I sincerely plan for the kingdom, being an honest guide for the fleet, with no concealment!"

Upon hearing this, Chiwaco raised an eyebrow. He observed the sincere expression on the Maya merchant's face and listened to his generous oath, pondering silently for a while. Moments later, he stroked his chin and asked the key to his suspicion.

"Tikalo, you know so much about epics and secrets, you're definitely not of commoner origin. What is your relationship with the Mayapan Kingdom and that Kekum Family?"

"Hmm..."

Tikalo pondered slightly. His true identity should be known only to His Highness blessed by Divine Revelation within the whole alliance. His stories have always been genuine Maya tales, without any falsification. Next, as the fleet is about to head to Yucatan, a series of plans need to be wrapped up. This particular conversation must gain the fleet's trust. Apart from Huitu onboard, all are very alert. His words must be nine parts true, with just a slight fabrication in certain critical areas.

"Esteemed Captain Chiwaco, Mayapan has been extinguished for over forty years, and the Kokom Family exterminated. What possible relation could I have with them now?"

Tikalo gazed into Chiwaco's eyes, his demeanor forthright.

"Certainly, as merchants wandering the seas, we do possess astronomical and geographical knowledge passed down. These legacies originate from Mayapan. Most of our ancestors were merchants of Mayapan. My ancestors were coastal nobility remaining after Mayapan's collapse, which is why many epic tales were passed down. I yearn for the lost kingdom and look forward to the former glory of our family! Yet all this has gone by, and it bears no relevance anymore..."

"When mighty Mayapan fell, we sea merchants lost our sovereign, estates, and clans, living for ourselves since then. Now, His Highness is my sovereign, promising me today and the future, so I live for His Highness!"

"Maritime nobility of Mayapan, astronomical and geographical legacy... living for His Highness?"

The old militia man's eyes glittered, staring intently at the Maya merchant Tikalo. Tikalo smiled slightly, facing him openly. The two locked gazes for a prolonged moment until Priest Tomate coughed lightly, coming forth to ease the tension.

"Cough! Praise the Chief Divine! Captain Chi, Tikalo prays three times daily, demonstrating utmost devotion. He's served the kingdom for many years; His Highness trusts him... As for the Maya stories he tells, you can verify them with local nobility for their authenticity. We travel five thousand miles, and the most important thing is to unite under the Chief Divine's guidance!"...

"Hmm... Priest Tomate, what you said indeed makes sense."

The old militia man nodded, shifting his gaze. He didn't find specific doubts about Tikalo, yet he felt something was off.

"Huh! A large group of Maya Warriors is approaching us!"

Puap kept looking around and immediately alerted the fleet.

"Be alert, pick up your weapons!"

Everyone gathered at the ship's sides, gazing at hundreds of Maya Warriors rowing dozens of canoes, approaching closer from the riverbank.

Due to the rainforest's hot climate, most Maya Warriors differed from the highland Mexica Warriors, wearing neither cotton nor leather armor, only short feathered crowns on their heads with wraps and ropes at their waists. They carried a small shield on their left arm, a flint spear as tall as a person on their back, with flint daggers on their waists.

Eagle Eye observed closely and found small darts specifically used for throwing embedded in the shields' cords of the Maya Warriors. Behind them, some held javelin throwers, javelins, and a few short bows.

Priest Tomate squinted, scrutinizing the bare-chested Maya Warriors. Many had similar Divine drawings and runes etched on their chests and backs, along with abstract symbols symbolizing family. Clearly, these Maya tribes had a strong faith in the Divine, with a significant sense of family identity.

Soon, a Warrior Leader dressed in short cotton armor and facial tattoos arrived at the flagship. He frowned, observing the equipment of the warriors on the ship, swiftly gripping his long spear vigilantly. Then, he loudly shouted to the people on the flagship from ten steps away, first in Maya and then in oddly accented Navajo.

"Warriors and merchants from the mighty Fierce Tiger Tribe! This is the divine realm of the Moon Mother Goddess, where rivers flow and trade flourishes... The Moon God bestowed the Divine Descendant's command through my mouth, Chaha, to tell you! The fleet from afar has long been known by the gods. You are not enemies, you are friends. Friends should sit together, drink wine, eat, and trade together!"...

"Currently, the revered Divine Descendant of the Moon Water God in the city-state, Crocodile King Aayin, awaits friends' arrival in the palace! Friends ashore are now feasting, with beautiful maidens, waiting for the sun to set. Come, esteemed leaders of the fleet, join me to meet the Divine Descendant of the city-state and enjoy a glorious dinner!"

"Hmm?"

Upon hearing the invitation from the Maya Warrior Leader, Chiwaco pursed his lips, displaying confusion on his face. He turned to Puap and inquired.

"Have the warriors and sailors who went ashore to buy food and water returned?"

"No. None have come back!"

Puap frowned, looking toward the distant market, but saw no sign of the kingdom's warriors.

"From what these Mayans are saying, have the crew ashore been controlled by them?"

"Hmm..."

Chiwaco scratched his head, gazing at the Maya Warrior Leader for a moment. The man smiled, showing no hostility, even genuine sincerity. He looked around again; most of the hundred Maya Warriors lacked armor, and their expressions didn't seem inclined to fight...

"Alright!"

After hesitating briefly, Chiwaco finally nodded. He turned to Puap, giving careful instructions.

"Old Pu, I'll go ashore, get to Red Lake Town, and see what Crocodile King Aayin wants with us! You stay on the ship with the warriors, stay alert. If I'm not back by tonight, you hurry and..."

"Don't worry! Old Chi, I'll take the warriors, armor up, and break in to rescue you!"

Puap patted his chest, promising generously. Seeing the Maya Warrior's gear, confidence surged within him, ready to take on five opponents!

"...You..."

Chi thought initially to instruct Old Pu to escape if he didn't return, but seeing the promise from the Huitu Warrior, he bit his lips, softened his gaze, and changed his words.

"Alright, do what you consider best!"...

Subsequently, Chi turned to the ship's revered Chief God Priest. Many kingdom negotiations' decisions rested in Priest Tomate's hands.

"Priest Tomate, please accompany me to this meeting, to meet the opposite leader!"

"Thank the Chief Divine! Okay, I'll go with you to see those lost brothers."

Priest Tomate nodded heavily, extending his hand to grab a Book of Ama Colley, with a bronze axe tied at his waist.

Maya merchant Tikalo stood by, his mouth slightly upturned. Hearing the Maya Warrior's call and invitation, he could already guess what it was about.

"The Heavenly Serpent Divine protects His descendants! It seems that the previous arrangements have finally paid off..."

"Tikalo!"

The old militia man instructed a few words and suddenly turned around. He looked at the cunning Maya merchant, issuing a solemn order.

"You also come with me for a walk in town, to meet the Maya's Divine Descendant!"

"Uh?..."

Hearing this, Tikalo's smile froze, stunned. Yet the old militia man gave him no chance to speak, waved a big hand, shouldered a long spear, and jumped into the Maya's small boat.

"Let's go! The sooner we go, the sooner we return!"

Chapter 1054: The Second Kingdom Exploration, Mother Goddess' Blessing, Treasure Ships Coming from the East!

The sunset descended, imprinting deep colors on the towering temple. The moon rose high, casting shadows and lights on the splendid palace. With a group of Maya Warriors accompanying, they stepped onto the silt-congested riverbank, passed through the gradually emptying market, and walked down

streets lined with shacks. As the stone houses grew more frequent, a wide, two-story square palace appeared before them.

Chief God Priest Tomate observed the street scenes along the way with interest. Although Red Lake Town wasn't large, it had plenty of brick houses. Most of the brick houses were within the inner circle's nobility and warriors' gathering area, outnumbering those in the ancient Feathered Serpent City of the Totonac people, with many being two stories. Clearly, the Maya's brickmaking and building techniques were quite advanced, and the degree of obedience among the commoners was very high, with wealth more concentrated on the upper echelons.

Along the way, they also saw a small temple under construction. The temple facade was carved with a black Wolf God with a red tongue. The Wolf God stood on white silver sand, clutching a large gemstone and wearing a golden crown on its head.

"Hmm? This is, this is!..."

Priest Tomate paused, suddenly recalling something. He was speechless, and his expression started to falter.

"Haha! Priest from the Fierce Tiger Tribe, you guessed it right!"

The Warrior Leader Chaha smiled, forcefully patted his chest, and pointed towards the small temple.

"This is indeed the spirit from your Fierce Tiger Tribe! Bringing the Wealth God, Xiuluo, who bestows us with gemstones and copper artifacts!"

"We...Wealth God Xiuluo? Isn't that the blind one..."

Old Militia Chiwaco's eyes widened, momentarily at a loss for words.

"Haha! The Highland's Wealth God indeed works miracles! He sent us gems that became the standard for trade, making commerce more prosperous. And just as the construction of the temple was

completed, treasure-laden large ships arrived from the West!... Come, my friendly friends, please follow me. The venerable Water Serpent Descendant is waiting in the palace!"

"Treasure-laden large ships?"

Upon hearing this, Chiwaco's eyes revealed a glint. He was about to inquire further but saw Warrior Leader Chaha lift the palace's cloth door and gesture for everyone to enter.

The stone palace had two levels, the lower level being wide and the upper somewhat smaller. At this moment, dozens of Kingdom's Warriors and sailors were sitting cross-legged in the lower level of the palace, eating and drinking heartily alongside hundreds of Maya Warriors. Some even held Maya maidens in their arms.

"Damn! These heartless turkeys!"

Chiwaco gritted his teeth, scanning the crowd harshly. Seeing the fleet's captain and priest enter, the dozens of warriors and sailors froze, awkwardly standing up from their seats in a panic. A Kingdom's Warrior hurriedly pushed away the woman in his arms and hastily explained.

"C-Captain, they forcibly invited us here..."

"We'll talk about it later!"

With a stern face, Chiwaco glanced at the Maya Warriors standing in the palace and gave another order.

"Continue eating!"

As they spoke, they ascended the stone steps, reaching the palace's second floor, which was far more luxurious. The walls bore murals of deities, colors of feathers hung down, and there was a sculpture of the Moon Mother Goddess inlaid with gemstones.

The Moon Mother Goddess held a small green vial in her tiger claws. On closer inspection, the vial was actually made from dozens of the Kingdom of the Lake's emeralds, bonded by an unknown adhesive!

"The great Moon Mother Goddess, watching over this land! We worship and show piety, making her pleased so that floods will not descend, and wealth will flow with the waters to us!"

At this moment, a Maya Divine Descendant, donned in a magnificent robe, with a Feather Crown on his head, and a Divine Staff in hand, sat solemnly on a red volcanic rock low seat, gazing at everyone. He had a long divine head, peculiar cockfight-like eyes, long hair coiled like a serpent, and mysterious blue and yellow facial markings.

Tikalo stood at the back, raising an eyebrow. Here stood a true Maya noble, fitting the oldest Maya aesthetic.

The forehead was long and flat, shaped by bound wood planks when the skull hadn't solidified at birth. The odd eyes were developed by hanging objects moving back and forth before infants, training them through continuous observation. The coiled hair, like knots, was adorned with feathers, resembling the tail of the Serpent divine. Whereas the blue facial markings symbolized the sky communicating with the Divine Realm, and the yellow ones represented corn, a plea for a bountiful harvest from the Rice God.

To attain such a divine-like face required nurturing from a young age, with pains and hardships beyond imagination. This distinctive appearance was also the necessary price for ruling over the commoners! Without a divine-like bearing, how could the Maya Nobles instill faith in the godly warriors and people? And a Maya commoner born into humble origins could never lead warriors and people, as they couldn't even pass the divine facade test!

Hence, in thousands of years of Maya epics, the protagonists were always heroic divine descendants and priests, with perhaps an extraordinary noble warrior added in. Countless commoners were truly just eternally toiling, driven, enslaved, and sacrificed ants. Such a stable hierarchy of class was beyond what the martial-focused Nawa Departments on the Highlands could achieve.

"True Maya nobility, their divinity is not merely in their visage, but also in their mouths..."

Tikalo pondered, staring at the poised Maya Divine Descendant. Soon, the Maya Divine Descendant raised the Divine Staff, smiling as he welcomed them.

"Friends from the Fierce Tiger Tribe! I am the descendant of the Moon Goddess, sovereign of the City-State and all people. Crocodile King Aayin welcomes your arrival, and the wealth you have brought with you!"

Crocodile King Aayin's words made Chiwaco, two steps away, jump in fright. The old militia member inhaled sharply, observing the other's slightly curved teeth, filed to sharp points like serpent fangs, embedded with small blue gemstones between the "serpent fangs," flashing with treasure light as the mouth opened.

Meanwhile, the center of the red tongue was pierced by a stone spike, hung with a thin jade peg, which clinked divinely against the teeth while speaking.

"Hiss! How brutal! Filing the teeth like this, then piercing the tongue and hanging a jade peg... that must be agonizing!..."

Crocodile King Aayin, seeing the old militia's shock at his divine visage, was quite satisfied. He waved his hand with a smile, indicating no formalities needed. Then, he pondered slightly before standing up, holding the Divine Staff, approaching Chiwaco, and condescendingly handing him a sky-blue, half-hand-wide ancient jade token. Engraved on the jade plate was an old woman with tiger claws and snake hair, the image of the Moon Mother Goddess.

"Friend from the Fierce Tiger Tribe! This is the token of the Water Serpent Descendant, a symbol of friendship acknowledged by the Moon Mother Goddess! Coming up is the welcoming banquet, where friends may eat and drink to their heart's content, with beautiful maidens attending... This is a welcome the Moon Mother Goddess recognizes!"

Crocodile King Aayin smiled while expressing goodwill once more, his gaze swept over the astonished crowd, lingered briefly on Tikalo's less divine face, then moved on unconcerned. Subsequently, he heavily pounded the Divine Staff on the bluestone ground, emitting a crisp "ding-dong." Crocodile King Aayin offered no chance for retort, announcing in a clear voice.

"Friends welcomed by the Moon Mother Goddess! The divine has already decreed, known to the coastal Maya tribes. Sailing treasure-laden ships, you came from the east, following divine guidance, first docking at my City-State. This is the Goddess's shelter and the Wealth God's blessing. Come! After the

banquet, friends may enjoy eating and drinking to your heart's content, with beautiful maidens attending... This is a welcome the Moon Mother Goddess recognizes!"

"What? Are we the fleet of gems? Known by the coastal Maya tribes?!..."

Upon hearing this, the old militia was stunned, looking to the Chief God Priest beside him. Priest Tomate frowned, gazing around, noticing the Maya Warriors who had stood up, and issued an instruction.

"Carry on eating!"

With that, they strolled up the stone staircase, finding themselves on the palace's more opulently appointed second floor, with walls adorned with divine murals, draped in colorful feathers, and featuring a gem-encrusted Moon Mother Goddess sculpture.

The Moon Mother Goddess clutched a small green bottle in her tiger claws. Upon close inspection, this little bottle turned out to be crafted from numerous emeralds from the Kingdom of the Lake, bonded together with an unknown adhesive!

"The great Moon Mother Goddess blesses this land! We serve her with devotion and she rejoices, ensuring that floods do not fall and that wealth flows in with the waters!"

At that moment, a Maya Divine Descendant, clad in luxurious robes, wearing a Feather Crown, and holding a Divine Staff, sat solemnly on a red-colored volcanic rock low seat, gazing at the crowd. He possessed an elongated, divine head, peculiar crossed eyes like a cockfight, long hair tied like a snake with inserted feathers, resembling the tail of the serpent divine. The blue facial markings symbolized communication with the divine sky, and the yellow ones emulated the color of maize, a prayer for a bountiful harvest from the Rice God.

Tikalo, standing at the back, raised an eyebrow. This was truly a Maya Noble, fitting the most ancient Maya aesthetics.

To acquire such a god-like visage, one had to begin training from a very young age, enduring pain and hardship beyond imagination. But such a unique appearance was a necessary cost to govern the common people! Without a divine bearing, how could Maya Nobles inspire faith in the godly warriors

and the masses? And a common-born Maya could never possess the ability to command warriors and the populace, lacking even the divine visage!

In the millennium-long Maya epics, the protagonists have forever been the heroic divine descendants and priests, at most accompanied by distinguished noble warriors.

"A true Mayan noble, his divinity face is not his only feature, it dwells also within his mouth..."

Tikalo mused within, fixating on the poised Maya Divine Descendant. Soon, the Maya Divine Descendant, sitting with dignity, stared at everyone sternly. He had a long, divine head, unusual eyes resembling that of a cockfight, long serpentine hair adorned with feathers, and his face bore mysterious blue and yellow markings.

Crocodile King Aayin finally spoke, sending a tremble through Chiwaco, standing two paces away. He took a sharp breath watching Aayin, who had a slightly curving set of teeth, their tips filed sharp, with the center of the red tongue pierced by a stone spike, a slender jade peg hanging from the center. When he spoke, the peg tinkled against his teeth with a divine sound.

"Sssss! So ruthless! To use a file to shape one's teeth so sharply and pierce the tongue! That must hurt a lot!..."

Watching the astonished old militia, Crocodile King Aayin seemed pleased. He signaled everyone to rest with a smile, then pondered slightly before standing, clutching the Divine Staff, and approached the side of Chiwaco, handing him a sky-blue, half-hand-wide, ancient jade token with condescension.

"A token of the Water Serpent Descendant, a friendship recognized by the Moon Mother Goddess! Now, welcome to the banquet, friends. Feel free to eat; beautiful girls will serve you!"

Chapter 1055: The Second Kingdom Exploration, the Evil Demon's Prophecy, Hidden Killing Intent!

Torchlights were ignited in the grand hall, the sculpture of a snake's head twisted on the walls, casting elongated shadows of serpents. The Crocodile King Aayin with serpent-like hair and a long head wore a smile, gripping a divine staff adorned with serpent patterns, his mouth revealing gleaming serpent teeth that appeared especially amiable in the interplay of shadow and firelight.

The old Militia looked around at the equally amiable Maya Warriors, remained silent for a moment, and then forced a smile to speak.

"Honorable Crocodile King Aayin, we would be most delighted to trade with you. But we would like to know, how did you come to be aware of the news about our gemstone fleet?"

"Haha! Very well! This is the divine revelation of the Moon Mother Goddess, and the devout descendants naturally hear the words of the divine and know of your arrival."

The Crocodile King Aayin maintained a divine semblance of a smile, narrating vague and mysterious answers according to the divine descendants' customs.

"Uh?... "

The old Militia scratched his head, glanced at the displeased Priest Tomate, thought for a moment, and then rephrased his question.

"Honorable Chieftain Aayin, your piety is admirable! May I inquire, have the various Maya tribes on the Northeast Peninsula also received the divine revelation and learned of our arrival at this time?"

"Hmm... That depends on the piety of the descendants and the degree of favor they receive from the Mother Goddess."

The Crocodile King Aayin pondered for a while, estimated the traveling speed of the tribe's envoys, and replied with a smile.

"In the region of the Red River, under the Mother Goddess's protection, the tribes along the river have already received the divine revelation: the God of Wealth has sent forth a blessed envoy, and a fleet brimming with gemstones from a foreign land is sailing along the coast towards the East!... As for the Maya tribes in the Northeast lowlands, under the protection of the Heavenly Serpent Divine, the Rain Divine, the Feathered Serpent Divine, and the Corn God's protectors, they'll probably receive the revelation several days later. But one way or another, the divine revelation is spreading. Every tribe will be prepared to warmly 'welcome' the arrival of the foreign gemstone fleet!..."

"Therefore, my friends, let us begin trading first! Red Lake Town is the center of Long River trade in the south, and there will be enough goods here to leave you with the most gemstones!"

"Ah?... The divine revelation has spread, and all tribes are warmly welcoming?!..."

The old Militia pursed his lips, not knowing how to respond for a moment. This journey to the East spans five thousand li, far from the reach of the Alliance's influence, and is already quite arduous. Now, for some reason, the news of the gemstone fleet has spread among the various Maya tribes... This Eastern exploration might not just be difficult, but perilous indeed!

"Such a warm 'welcome', I would rather do without it!..."

The old Militia looked at the surrounding Maya Warriors, showing a worried expression. He finally understood where the unease on this journey stemmed from. Chief God Priest Tomate lowered his eyes, pondered for a moment, and made a decision. Then, he raised one hand holding the scripture and another holding the Sun Amulet around his neck, with a dignified expression, boldly stepped forward.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Huitzilopochtli protects us! Honorable Water Divine Descendant, Crocodile King Aayin, I am the envoy of the Sun God, War God, and Mexica Chief Divine, Priest Tomate. Our fleet brings gemstones from the western highlands, and we also bear arms to resist the coming evil from the Eastern Sea! We carry the divine oracle of the Chief Divine and the prophecy of the Divine Revelation Prophet with us. Our journey to the Eastern Sea is not merely for trade!"

Seeing the foreign priest stepping forward, the Crocodile King Aayin's expression stiffened. Even to the envoys of a foreign divine, the Mayan Nobility would maintain basic respect, especially since the divine beings of the Mexican Plateau had guided the eastern expeditions there and left an impression of brutality and strength among the Maya tribes...

"Honorable foreign priest, could you please elaborate on the divine oracle and prophecies?"

The Crocodile King Aayin slightly nodded, earnestly listening to Priest Tomate's account.

"Honorable Chieftain Aayin! The Chief Divine has delivered an oracle, the divine seal in the Eastern Sea is loosening, and the power of evil demons is reawakening. White-skinned demons from an exotic realm

will arrive from the ends of the sea within a few years, bringing slaughter and destruction, plague and death!"

"Hmm?! White-skinned demons, coming within a few years from the Eastern Sea?!"

Upon hearing such an accurate prophecy, the Crocodile King Aayin displayed an expression of shock. He looked at Priest Tomate with suspicion but saw nothing but resolve and dedication toward the divine, along with a fervor for sacrificial services in Tomate's eyes.

"Indeed! Chieftain Aayin, the Mayans are our lost brothers. The Mexican Prophet received the divine revelation and sent us on a distant voyage, carrying gemstones and wealth to inform you of this dreadful prophecy!"

Priest Tomate nodded affirmatively. In this eastward journey, his highness the divine revelation gave him an important task of spreading the divine prophecy among the various Maya tribes. He remembered every word of his highness and now was indeed the best time to narrate this startling prophecy!

"...The white-skinned demons will have roaring giant beasts, thunderous roars, and enormous snake boats! They will masquerade as envoys of the divine, bearing false expressions that beneath lie ravenous maws devouring all! They yearn for the divinity, wealth, and lands of the descendants, constantly scheming to seize them as their own. Their greed for gold and silver is profound, and they'll break bones and drink marrow to slay the citizens of the divine! They'll raise the evil God's cross, destroy the scriptures of all gods, and ruin temple abodes... They are the embodiment of evil and greed!"

"And more evilly, they will spread lethal plagues, casting toxic clouds that corrupt the descendants of the Jiao People, causing them to die wretchedly with rotting bodies! These plagues are most dreadful and hard to guard against... Chieftain Aayin, please be vigilant and disseminate the prophecy of the white-skinned demons to the Maya tribes upstream of the Long River. Meanwhile, our fleet will continue sailing northeast, spreading the prophet's prophecy and searching for the site where the divine seal loosens in the depths of the Eastern Sea, to guard against the arrival of the first wave of demons!"

"Roaring giant beasts, thunderous roars, enormous snake boats?... Masquerading envoys of the divine, yearning for gold and silver, lifting the evil god's cross, destroying scriptures and temples?... Spreading lethal plagues, rotting to death!..."

Upon hearing the details of the prophecy, the face of King Aayin changed dramatically. He remained silent for a long time, unable to discern any trace of falsehood on the face of Priest Tomate. After a while, he asked in a low, melancholic voice.

"Priest from the Fierce Tiger Tribe! Even though you appear so sincere and your tale is vivid... how can I trust that the divine revelation prophecy you speak of is indeed true?"

"Honorable Chieftain Aayin, the prophecy of the divine revelation does not require your belief at this moment. You only need to prepare, and you will naturally witness its manifestation within ten years! The prophets only hope that when you encounter the white-skinned demons, you will not be swayed by their evil methods and deceitful words. Remember this: the white-skinned demons and we with yellow skin are destined to fight to the death, no matter if it takes hundreds of years, one side must fall, leaving no room for compromise!"

Priest Tomate raised the Book of Ama Colley and held the amulet high, speaking loudly with fervor. He had firm faith in everything foretold by the prophecy and was ready for the battle ahead.

And those Maya Divine Descendants who heard this prophecy, whether they believed it at the moment or not, would inevitably find their answers when the white-skinned demons appeared, matching the events foretold in the prophecy one by one!

"His Highness has said that resisting the demons coming from the Eastern Sea is an extremely long process. We must unite all descendants of the Jiao People so they know the true nature of the demons and are not deceived by them or given a chance to gain a foothold and expand!... Making the first move by spreading the divine prophecy will be the greatest advantage!"

Firelight flickered, and snake shadows danced in the Mayan palace, and for a moment, silence fell. After a while, King Aayin tightened his grip on the Divine Staff and forced a smile.

"Priest from the Fierce Tiger Tribe, I am aware of the prophecy concerning the Eastern Sea. Such a significant matter, I will naturally consult the Moon Mother Goddess to receive divine revelation! For now, let us enjoy the banquet together and then trade gemstones!"

"Thank you for your hospitality, esteemed Chieftain Aayin! We are delighted to attend your banquet, but the divine prophecy urges us not to linger here too long."

Priest Tomate, with a solemn demeanor and firm words.

"As for the gemstone trade, it is one of the Chief Divine's wishes as well, and we are happy to comply. Please bring the trade goods and accompany us to the riverbank to carry out the exchange! Once it's complete, we will depart."

"Hmm? Trading at the riverbank? You will not stay longer?"

At these words, King Aayin raised an eyebrow, his expression turning slightly cold. He heavily stamped his Divine Staff, and all the Maya Warriors around him tensed, gripping their long spears tightly and enveloping everyone with vigilant encirclement.

"My friends, I have shown you such warm hospitality, prepared a grand feast! Do you really refuse to stay for one more night?"

"Honorable Chieftain Aayin, we have a sacred mission that concerns all the gods' realms. If we delay here and hinder the Chief God's important matters, I fear that the supreme divine being might inflict divine punishment!"

Priest Tomate's expression slightly softened, his face showing respect, leaving room for Chieftain Aayin.

"This voyage to the east follows divine revelation, spreading the prophecy, which is the most important godly task! Tomorrow morning, the fleet must set sail on time per the divine will. Even if we are still here, the fleet will not wait and will leave directly!"

Hearing that the fleet would leave everyone behind and depart, King Aayin's eyes flickered, and the chill on his face gradually faded. Seeing this, Priest Tomate allowed himself a slight smile and spoke candidly.

"The Chief Divine blesses the world, guiding the fleet and every tribe under the heavens! The gemstone trade is just a way for the Maya tribes to hear the divine revelation prophecy... How about this! Chieftain Aayin, since you have heard the divine will, for the subsequent trade, we can offer you thirty percent more in terms of the gemstone value!"

"Oh? Thirty percent more gemstones!"

Upon hearing this, King Aayin pondered for a moment, finally letting a smile appear on his face.

These terms fell short of his most perfect plan, yet they were still somewhat acceptable. After all, the opposing party wasn't a soft, sweet persimmon nor a helpless turkey, and his hearing of the Mexican prophecy has indeed sown some seeds of apprehension in his heart.

"Very well! Friends from the Fierce Tiger Tribe, the Moon Mother Goddess welcomes your friendly arrival and supports your divine voyage!"

King Aayin raised the Moon God's Divine Staff, baring a grin that revealed his shining snake fangs.

"Come now! Let us conduct the divine transaction under the sacred moonlight and by the blessed Mother River! Our friendship will flow as long as the Red River, like the divine long snake, flowing all the way to the Eastern Sea! Praise the Mother Goddess!"

"Mayan brothers, our common Ancestors of the Jiao People witness our sincere friendship! Praise to the Chief Divine!"

The conversation, fraught with hidden danger, faded away within the flowing snake shadows. The genuine praises and prayers arrived amid the bright bonfire. The Maya Warriors retracted their long spears again and celebrated with the kingdom's sailors. The leaders of both sides drank a cup of cocoa wine, making soul-deep vows under the watchful eyes of the divine beings.

The night deepened, the bonfire blazed high. Everyone praised friendship and the divine, laughing heartily, and host and guest were equally delighted. No dreadful surprises occurred, as if the God of Death, the Black Wolf with its red-tongued, cold-eyed visage atop the small temple, suddenly smiled benevolently and transformed into the God of Wealth.

Chapter 1056: The Second Kingdom Exploration, Singing and Dancing, Farewell to Friends

The moonlight was like water, falling upon the Long River, bright and indistinguishable. The bonfire flickered, illuminating the flat riverbank and the busy crowd.

Crocodile King Quinn led four hundred Maya warriors, standing on the riverbank, personally observing the scene of the trade. Hundreds of Maya civilians bowed their heads, bent their backs, and carried wide bamboo baskets, like obedient worker ants at someone's command. Basket after basket, all kinds of precious goods were piled on the riverbank front of the longship. Meanwhile, dozens of kingdom sailors were also carrying bags of expensive gemstones to the other side of the riverbank.

"The Chief Divine bears witness! A bag of gemstones exchanged for twelve baskets of salted fish... traded for ten bags of cocoa, eight rolls of cotton cloth, six bags of tobacco, four jars of honey..."

Mayan merchant Tikalo, proficient and familiar, called out the prices of the goods, presiding over the transaction between the two parties. Soon, baskets and baskets of goods were transported onto the ship, while bags of consistently high-quality lake gemstones flowed into the hands of the Mayan nobility.

Hearing these bargain prices, Crocodile King Aayin beamed with satisfaction. Red Lake Town lies downstream of the Red River, a hub of trade for dozens of Maya city-states upstream. The Maya nobles in each city-state sit high above, never overthrown by mortal people. For hundreds of years, they have accumulated immense wealth, even lacking places to spend it. Yet, the nobles' intense craving for gemstones has never been fully satisfied!

Lake gemstones are of excellent quality, suitable for decorating walls, crafting statues, adorning clothing, teeth, worn around the neck and arms, and offered at ceremonies to the divine, buried alongside divine descendants in tombs. In other words, with so many gemstones in his possession, he was never concerned about selling them. The bargains from this gemstone fleet are a steal, earning once to feast for three years!

With that thought, Crocodile King Aayin turned his head, jade pegs clashing against his teeth, muttering a few words. Warrior Leader Chaha bowed and complied, then hurriedly left with a batch of civilians, seemingly to fetch more goods.

"Dark Snake, what are you dazing off for? Hurry up, buy all forty jars of honey! With so many people here, what's there to fear about not finishing?"

Old militia Chiwaaco placed his hands on his hips, holding a bronze spear, waving his big hand. His eyelids twitched, but he shouted without hesitation. Frankly, old Chi had never been so lavish in his life.

"Ten baskets of dried spices exchanged for six bags of lake gemstones? Bought! Ten bags of crystal amber exchanged for ten bags of lake gemstones? Bought!... Ten bags of pure jade exchanged for thirteen bags of lake gemstones? What's there to hesitate about? All bought!... You bunch of dumb logs, if you don't buy all of these, will they even spare us to leave?... What? It's not worth the price? Mayans are our brothers, even if not worth it, we have to buy!"

Dark Snake lowered his head, carefully holding a large jar of honey, heading for the ship. Mayans possess beekeeping techniques, producing high-quality honey, abundant in quantity, with prices much lower than on the Mexican Plateau. Such a precious sweet treat, even when Atlixco City was still in the family's hands, he only tasted it during festivals.

"Such delicious honey... even the fearsome God of Death might not have tasted it, right? Old Chi actually lets us sailors eat freely... wah wah wah, old man is really kind!"

Dark Snake sneakily opened the lid of the ceramic jar a crack, extending his finger, stirring vigorously, and then sucked it thoroughly into his mouth. The sweet taste immediately filled his heart, making his eyes smile into crescents. Sailor Didi squatted nearby, drooling as he watched. He also held a jar of honey but didn't dare to sneak a taste.

"Here, have some too, it's on me!"

Dark Snake glanced around, the crew looking towards the trade on the riverbank, their eyes gleaming. He then decisively lifted the ceramic lid, offering the honey to Didi.

"Eat quickly, eat quickly! You've never tasted honey this sweet!"

Sailor Didi tremblingly extended his hand, carefully dipped some honey, and tasted it. Momentarily after, his eyes turned star-shaped, tears of happiness spilling from the corners. He took two more bites but suddenly felt unstable, as if intoxicated.

"I... I'm a bit dizzy..."

"Haha! Didi, seems like you've never tasted anything this sweet! Just a little bite, and you're dizzy!"

Dark Snake chuckled, turned his head to look around, and then gazed at the moonlight in the sky. Tonight's weather was perfect, the evening breeze calm and serene. Sailing could actually be this wonderful!

"The night is perfect, and the fire bright! All regular warriors, put on leather armor, warriors above third level, switch to copper armor, be ready for battle anytime! If these Mayans don't behave, I'll send them off to meet the Moon Mother!"

On the flagship, Puap, draped in copper armor, armed with a greatbow, strapped with a copper axe, exuded a murderous aura. Behind him, dozens of Prepecha warriors were fully equipped, ready for combat.

Brave warrior Huitu watched for a moment, his gaze fixating on the peculiar-looking Crocodile King Aayin. He closed one eye, gauging the distance, frowning. He pondered for a while, then looked to his side, asking in a deep voice.

"See that strange divine descendant? Peculiarly shaped, holding a divine staff! At this distance, who among you has confidence to hit?"

The warriors listened and looked over, seeing the Maya chieftain a hundred-odd steps away, all silent, except for two archers who stepped forward. Puap focused his gaze and saw it was Mountain Bird Cavado from the Yoreim group, and Frog Kexi, a surviving scout from Tiburon Island. And next to them, Silver Raven Warrior Fish Eagle opened his mouth, then looked again at the unfamiliar greatbow in his hand, choosing silence.

"Good! Mountain Bird, Frog, both of you prepare! If the other side makes any move, release the arrows together and shoot that Crocodile Divine Descendant!"

The two divine archers nodded silently, holding the greatbow in one hand, gripping copper arrows with the other, secretly regulating their breathing. On the riverbank, Crocodile King Aayin seemed to sense something and glanced at the ship. Soon, he gazed attentively at the warriors' armor, greatbows, and copper axes, pondering.

"Hmm... these warriors from the Fierce Tiger Tribe seem very capable! These armors and weapons..."

Crocodile King Aayin estimated the number of warriors on the ship, feeling warier. At this moment, the trade on the riverbank was nearly concluded. The Mayans were exchanging precious cinnabar, gold, and silver grains for an equal weight of gemstones. Such high-value goods wouldn't amount to much; exchanging two thousand pounds would likely suffice.

"Friends from the Fierce Tiger Tribe! Your armor and weapons seem quite extraordinary..."

Crocodile King Aayin wore a smile and pointed towards the ship.

"The Moon Mother Goddess watches over us! Could you bring your armors and weapons for me to take a look at?"

"Hm?..."

The old militia Chiwaco pondered for a moment, then responded with a smile.

"Honorable Chieftain Aayin, the Moon Mother Goddess bears witness! Our friendship is as unending as the Long River. On behalf of the fleet, I can give you five bronze spears, two bronze axes, and a crocodile leather armor!"

"Oh? Not bad, very good!"

Crocodile King Aayin nodded with satisfaction. In no time, a sailor from the kingdom hurried over to deliver the weapons and armor to the escort of the Maya chieftain. Crocodile King Aayin tested the hardness of the leather armor, raising an eyebrow. Then, he tried the blade of the spear, which easily pierced into the soil. Crocodile King Aayin's eyes flashed as he picked up the bronze axe, ordering a Maya warrior to take up a flint dagger. As they clashed, the dagger tip snapped while the bronze axe blade remained unscathed.

"Hiss!"

Crocodile King Aayin suddenly changed color. He pursed his lips and, after lowering his gaze for a moment, reopened his eyes with a genuine, amicable smile.

"Haha! As expected of the warriors of the War God, the voyagers who bear the divine will! These equipments are truly enviable!... Praise the Mexica War God!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise the Moon Mother Goddess! The gods bear witness, we are all friends!"

The old militia nodded with a smile, responding with a few words. Then, both sides suddenly fell silent, as if neither was inclined to speak further.

The Long River flowed gently, and the firelight flickered softly. Once the trade was concluded, the warrior leader Chaha reappeared, now accompanied by over three hundred Maya warriors. Witnessing this, all the kingdom's warriors on the seven longships emerged, each armored and bow-ready, cautious and alert.

"Moon God protect us! Chieftain, I have brought enough warriors. Shall we..."

"Hm!"

Crocodile King Aayin raised his palm and gently waved it. Then, maintaining a serious demeanor yet smiling, he kindly addressed the fleet as the transaction came to an end.

"The Fierce Tiger Tribe is our friend! Let us send them off with song and dance!"

The Long River flowed endlessly as the sounds of celebratory singing and dancing reverberated along the shore. Warrior leader Chaha brandished a long spear, dancing a farewell war dance while mimicking the call of a cat owl. Crocodile King Aayin gestured with a divine staff, to which Chief God Priest Tomate responded with a similar gesture. The faces of more than a dozen Mayan nobles bore satisfied smiles, each holding a pouch of gemstones gifted by the fleet, as well as a copy of the Chief Divine's "Book of Ama Colley."

Dark Snake embraced a honey jar, observing the genuinely welcoming crowd on the shore, filled with emotion.

"Truly simple-hearted Mayans! Such kind and hospitable Divine Descendant Nobility!"

Priest Tomato stood at the ship's bow, watching the gradually receding shore and the slowly departing Mayan people. The bright moon was setting slowly, as the morning sun's dawn began to rise.

"His Highness said, the world's hustle is all for gainful exchanges. As priests guide people, they should act according to circumstances, ruling with both kindness and power!... Whew! It is truly the Chief Divine's protection that we could emerge from this meeting unscathed!"

Priest Tomato glanced upward slightly towards the eastern sunrise, silently praying for a moment, before reciting a passage noted by His Highness.

"Alas! The Chief Divine cherishes the world, bestowing divinity upon people's hearts. People originally have no desire to become demons, but are perpetually driven by material desires, often unconsciously becoming demons!"

Upon hearing this scripture, Maya Tikal raised an eyebrow, lowering his eyes. He sighed, looking at the hopeful red sun, whispering to himself.

"...If not becoming a demon, how can one survive? I have wagered my life on this journey, and am with all of you! Chief Divine protect us!"

Both silent and spoken prayers dissipated into the sea breeze. And in the corner of the fleet, Dark Snake and Didi clung to their honey jar, like two rats, snacking happily. The old militia Chiwaco, from far away, looked at the two sneaky youths, a faint smile curling at the corner of his mouth.

"Ha, onward we go! Kick aside stones when encountered; leap over puddles when met. A living person, after all, won't be stifled by a mere need to urinate... Onward we go, there is no need to look back!"

Further ahead, Puap stood at the ship's bow, still clad in armor. The valorous Huitu warrior did not look back. He gritted his teeth, gazed upon the eastern sea and sky, mumbling fiercely.

"Serpent Divine Descendant, Xiu Family... Your lord Huitu is coming!"

Chapter 1057: Second Kingdom Exploration, the Delicious Big Lobster that Fills You Up!

Early March, a warm breeze blows. This is the Gulf of Mexico coast, the best season with neither the strong winds from the Northern Continent's winter nor the Caribbean summer's violent typhoons. The Kingdom Fleet sails east, along the coast, calmly covering four hundred miles before entering a largely enclosed sandbar bay, arriving at extremely vast coastal lagoon.

"Chief Divine! Such a large lake?!"

Puap stands at the bow, looking around yet unable to see the end of the Great Lake. It is high tide, and the surging tide floods in through two openings in the bay, quickly transforming the coastal mudflats into a lake surface. Thousands of seabirds simultaneously take off from the food-laden mudflats, circling reluctantly. Huitu warrior looks up, seeing only vast expanses of wings soaring in the rising morning sun.

"Yo, yo yo!"

Dark Snake eyes widen blankly, watching the flying sky and listening to the calls of the flock. Didi sucks his fingers, eyes wide, watching the shimmering waves in the lake.

"Fish, so many fish! Big and fat sea fish, must be delicious!"

"Haha! This here, is along the entire Yucatan Peninsula coast, and even the largest most bountiful lake across the Peninsula!"

Tikalo smiles, drawing a big circle with both hands.

"One hundred twenty miles east to west, one hundred miles north to south—all 'Great Lake'!"

"Gosh! So big!"

Old militia Chiwaco gazes for a moment, greatly surprised.

"What is this Great Lake called?"

"Just 'Great Lake'!"

"What is this lake called?"

"Just 'Great Lake'!"

Tikalo repeats with a grin.

"For the Maya tribes around the lake, there is no bigger lake than this. The Great Lake in their mouths is the only one! And their main belief is the Rain Divine Chaac, who governs rains, lakes, and abundance."

Chiwaco pauses, somewhat speechless. Then, the Mayan merchant points to a Maya fishing village on the sandbar, smiling as he speaks.

"This sandbar separates the sea from the Great Lake, leaving two gaps east to west. During rising and falling tides, the currents are extremely swift and violent. Whenever the tide recedes, fish, shrimp, and shellfish unable to escape are left in the lake. At that time, not only will the birds from the sky come down to peck, but the villagers from the village will come rushing over, picking up fish and shrimp easily seen all over the mudflat."

The so-called "Great Lake" is today's Laguna Lake (Laguna de Términos) in Campeche, Mexico. The lake's edge is lush with mangroves and flying birds, its scenery beautiful, and it boasts delicious seafood.

"Oh!"

Mayan merchant Tikalo thinks for a moment, suddenly patting his head. He swallows, tugging on the old militia's arm, smiling at everyone.

"Chief Qui, Chief Pu, Priest Tomate... The village here produces a type of giant shrimp, incredibly fresh and delicious! If the local fishermen catch them, they will specially keep them for more than ten days, living in the seawater, reserved for passing fleets... Come, come, come! The fleet needs to go ashore to replenish fresh water, it's a perfect chance for us to have a feast!"

"What? Go ashore, eat what giant shrimp?"

Old militia Chiwaco purses his lips, slightly hesitant. The experiences from the past days are still vivid, leaving him somewhat wary about going ashore.

"Not going, not going!"

"Chief Qui, no need to be afraid. This fishing village, trading groups frequently dock their ships. They have just a few hundred villagers, and their warriors are but twenty or so people. To the Kingdom Fleet, there will be absolutely no risk!... Moreover, the shrimp in the village, are truly top-notch delicious!"

"That shrimp, is it really that good?"

Upon hearing this, Puap is somewhat tempted. He patting the old militia's shoulder, smiling.

"Old Qui, if you don't go, just stay behind to watch the ship. I'll take some people up to have a look..."

"Hmm... Okay! You go ahead! Take dozens of samurai ashore to resupply. I'll stay to watch the ship..."

Old militia Chiwaco thinks it over, and the fleet indeed needs to replenish fresh water here, so he nods in agreement. Then, he lowers his voice, leaning close to Puap's ear, softly reminding him.

"Keep an eye on that bald fox!"

"Huh?... Okay!"

Puap nods in a daze. The old militia turns to Priest Tomate, smiling as he asks.

"Priest Tomate, are you going ashore too?"

Priest Tomate nods solemnly. He holds two illustrated copies of the Book of Ama Colley in his hand, seriously explaining.

"I am going ashore not to eat shrimp, but to spread the glory of the Chief Divine! Praise the Chief Divine!..."

"...Praise the Chief Divine!"

The old militia smiles and prays. Then, he thinks for a moment, his gaze slightly softening, speaking to Puap.

"Old Pu, you bring Dark Snake and Didi along too! Let them taste that shrimp!"

"Huh?... Okay!"

As the sun rises to midday, the samurai have replenished the fresh water, all gathered at the sandbar fishing village. Dozens of Maya fishermen cautiously serve large pots of fish soup, carrying grilled shrimp and fish, presenting them respectfully to the samurai lords with weapons. The elderly village chief, smiling, accompanies a few nimble villagers in presenting a full six clay pots of grilled giant lobsters to the leader of the lords.

"Oh? Are shrimp really this big?"

Huitu Puap reaches into the clay pot, grabbing the largest shrimp. The shrimp is over forty centimeters long, about as thick as his forearm, weighing several pounds. Puap smells the fragrant aroma of the lobster, poking the hard shell, unsure of how to start eating.

"Such hard shell? How to eat?"

"Haha! It's simple! Twist off the shrimp head, at most sprinkle a little salt into the body, and then just suck the meat out directly!"

"Huh? What about these big claws? How to break them open?"

Puap extends his hand, gesturing at claws larger than his palm, amazed.

"Whoa! Truly a marine beast! How can the fishermen easily catch them..."

"Oh, those claws, no need to bother breaking them open, just toss them away. Anyway, there's plenty of lobster, enough to guarantee everyone can eat their fill! Come, try this top-notch deliciousness! No need to add anything, at most sprinkle some salt if it's bland, I promise you it's good enough to make you cry!"

Tikalo eagerly twists off a palm-sized lobster head, scooping up a bite of tender fresh shrimp meat, puts it in mouth to slowly chew, immediately showing an expression of enjoyment.

"Ah! Truly a nostalgic taste... Maya homeland's flavor!..."

"Whoa! Truly, truly delicious!"

Puap reaches out, grabbing forearm-length shrimp meat, holding it to take a few bites, immediately showing a look of amazement. The lobster meat when entering the mouth is tender and fresh, with natural sweetness and a hint of salt, the texture is extremely chewy. Huitu warrior immediately buries himself in hard work, eating two pounds of lobster meat in one go, feeling even more satisfying than inhaling Divine Smoke!

"Delicious, delicious! Not enough, not enough! Tikalo, have them bring two more pots of shrimp!"

"Delicious! Truly delicious! Better than honey!"

"Exactly! Dark Snake is right!"

Dark Snake holds a large shrimp, diligently scooping out shrimp meat, eyes shaped like crescent moons. Beside him, Didi stretches his tongue, humming unclear words while suckling the meat juice from the shrimp shell.

"Woo woo woo! Old Qui is so nice! Sailing is truly happiness!"

As for Chief God Priest Tomate, he is focused on using the Obsidian Dagger for offerings, skillfully picking out shrimp meat. His technique, precise and proficient, is simply astonishing! Beside him, a large pile of empty lobster shells has accumulated.

"Great! I'll go instruct the village chief to grill all the shrimp!"

Tikalo smiles at the crowd focused on eating shrimp, strolling leisurely to the village chief. In this isolated Maya fishing village, no one speaks Navajo. Among the fleet, only Tikalo and his guide are familiar with Maya language.

"...Everyone knows?"

"...Got it, noble lord higher than the sky, I'll handle it soon!"

Listening to Tikalo's instructions, the stooped old village chief continually bows, even bowing his head to his knees. Afterwards, he immediately calls several villagers to continue preparing delicacies for the lords.

Tikalo's lips curve up in a slight smile. By the time he turns again, his face is entirely relaxed.

"Ha, truly delicious! ...Maya homeland's flavor, right before us!"

Chapter 1058: The Second Kingdom Exploration, After the Fleet's Departure

"Haha, the shrimp here is so delicious! When we return to the ship, let's mark this village on the sea chart as Shrimp Village, and call this bountiful lake Big Shrimp Lake!"

The sea breeze was refreshing, with a fragrant aroma wafting through the air. After eating and drinking their fill, the group prepared to return to the ship. Puap reached into his pocket, and after feeling around for a while, generously took out a handful of shiny Lake Gems to pay for the meal that had fed dozens. However, the elderly village chief, with hair streaked with white, smiled humbly, bowing deeply at the waist, and carefully shook his head to refuse.

"Uh? What does he mean by this?"

Puap was taken aback and looked towards the Mayan merchant Tikalo. Tikalo smiled slightly and explained.

"Captain Pu, this fishing village has little contact with the outside world and is not under the governance of any Divine Descendant. They do not accept gems, only goods they can use."

"What? Goods they can use?"

"Yes, like the salted fish, cotton cloth, and cocoa that the fleet traded earlier."

"Uh... how much is needed?"

"Just two bolts of cloth will do. If you're satisfied, you can add a basket of salted fish. There aren't many people in their village, they lack tools, and chopping trees or boiling salt is not easy for them."

"Alright. Then let's take two rolls of cotton cloth and add two baskets of salted fish! The smell of those salted fish is too strong; it makes the samurai on the ship dizzy!"

With a wave of his big hand, Huí Tú Puap had two samurai return to the ship, bringing back the snow-white cotton cloth and the much-detested salted fish. When the old village chief saw the cotton cloth,

he showed no expression, but as soon as he caught the scent of the salted fish, his eyes instantly lit up. He bowed his head, prostrated himself, and continuously expressed his gratitude.

"Praise the Rain Divine! You noble lords who stand taller than the heavens, thank you for your generosity!... I will make sure your gracious words are passed on without a single omission!"

Seeing the respectful and kneeling old village chief, Puap smiled with satisfaction. However, he still had some doubts.

"Tikalo, what is he saying? He's been mumbling for so long!"

"Oh, Captain Pu. He is expressing thanks to the Divine and to the generous noble lords! He also prays to the Rain Divine, wishing us a safe and smooth journey!"

Tikalo's lips curled up while he respectfully translated. Upon hearing this, the Chief God Priest Tomate pondered briefly, then stepped forward, personally helping up the old Mayan village chief. Then, under the fearful and bewildered gaze of the old village chief, he took out a Sun Hummingbird Talisman from the Chief Divine and placed it around the old chief's neck.

"Praise the Chief Divine! He has created such delicious shrimp and, through your hardworking hands, let me enjoy it! This proves you are loved by the Chief Divine. Wear this Sun Amulet, pray regularly, and light will naturally come! Praise the Chief Divine! Huitzilopochtli!..."

While praying, Priest Tomate also took out a pictorial "Book of Ama Colley" and placed it in the old village chief's hands. This time, the old chief was directly frightened into trembling. He looked at the "sacred" images in his hands and plummeted to the ground.

"Honorable Lord Priest! I... I have no sacred bloodline, and I'm still able to work... I won't accept your offerings. Please don't sacrifice me to the Rain Divine!"

In the overpopulated, socially stratified Maya Tribes, when common people became too old and unable to continue working, their fate was often to be abandoned in the rainforest by the tribe or directly sacrificed to the various deities. And this "old" age was typically under forty.

"He... what is he?..."

Priest Tomate looked at the extremely fearful old village chief, somewhat surprised. He turned to Tikalo, who pursed his lips and whispered a translation of the old man's words. Priest Tomate chuckled silently, but halfway through his laugh, he suddenly lowered his eyes and could no longer smile.

Abandonment of the elderly and sacrifice to the Divine, similar to the law of the jungle. The Maya Tribes were like this, as were the martial Highland Tribes, the cruel Wilderness Tribes, and in a world where the average life expectancy was just over twenty, was it any different? Yet, in this coastal fishing village, the lagoon and tides daily brought abundant food, making this old Mayan village chief truly fortunate to have survived to an old age...

"The Chief Divine brings light! His Highness who receives Divine Revelation leads all beings!... Priests should study agriculture and work hard to improve productivity. There need to be more farmlands in this world, where more corn grows to feed more people and allows the elders of various tribes to live longer!... This is the Chief Divine's greatest compassion!"

Priest Tomate closed his eyes and sincerely prayed to the midday sun for a moment. This scripture segment was also written by His Highness, but in the Lake Capital City's High Priesthood, it was not something many honored elder priests valued. However, in this moment, Priest Tomate truly understood, sensing a rare glimmer of light in this merciless era.

"... The Chief Divine's compassion?"

Upon hearing this, the Mayan Tikalo raised his eyebrows, remaining silent. Priest Tomate concluded his prayer, lifted the old village chief once more, then reached out, gently grasped a strand of the old chief's hair, left behind the scripture and amulet, and turned to leave.

The sun tilted west, and the longship set sail. The Yucatan Peninsula veered north from here, and the coastline emerged on the Kingdom Fleet's eastern side. Moments later, this entourage from afar vanished at the northern horizon, like a bubble that had never been there.

The old village chief sat by the sea, watching the warm bubbles disappear, lost in thought. Later, with the sun amulet around his neck, he flipped through the "sacred book" he had never seen before, looking at the divine illustrations inside, until evening fell.

As evening approached, the western coastline's end unexpectedly revealed two more "bubbles." The old village chief gazed for a moment, seeing the familiar flat ship hulls, recognizing them as Mayan ships. The two Mayan oar-sail ships rowed quickly, soon reaching the fishing village on the sandbank. A few Mayan sailors jumped off the oar-sail ships, approaching the old village chief, asking in a deep voice.

"... Has it arrived?"

"... It has arrived."

"... Has it departed?"

"... It has departed."

"... Any other words?"

"... That's all."

After listening, the Mayan sailors nodded. One sailor took a small bag of medicinal tobacco from his pocket and tossed it at the old village chief's feet. Then, they boarded the ship once more, disappearing into the northern horizon under the cover of night.

The setting sun completely disappeared, and the night deepened. The old village chief, with a stooped posture, rolled two leaves of tobacco, produced a flint, and laboriously struck a flame, lighting the tobacco. Then, he took a puff, and by the flickering light, contemplated the image of the Chief Divine holding lightning on the scripture, continuing in silence. Until the cigarette nearly burned out, he sighed, closed the scripture, and stumbled over the ancient Tokara Navajo language, reciting.

"Praise... the Chief Divine! Huitzilopochtli!..."

"The ancient... Kingdom of the Toltecs, has perished. The Aztecs... call themselves the Toltecs. The ancient... Kingdom of Mayapan, has perished. The Tutulxiu... call themselves Mayapan. Now, the Aztecs are about to meet the Tutulxiu. And between them lies the last, the people of Mayapan..."

The ancient Tokara Navajo language recited into the wind, carrying an unspeakable antiquity, only to be drowned out by the sound of the retreating tide. And when the great tide returns, what will it completely engulf?

The old village chief did not know, nor did he want to know. He merely rose slowly to his feet, hunched over, and walked back to the village. Perhaps the scripture should be shown to the youths in the village, as it might be needed in the future. But today, the shoals of salted fish should be hung to dry under the wind-sheltered eaves to prevent them from getting damp and wasting the precious salt~

Chapter 1059: The Second Kingdom Exploration, Great Grass River, Sudden Encounter

The azure sky was like a clear wash, with white clouds drifting by. The sea was like a mirror, with specks of waves sparkling. The fleet set sail from Great Shrimp Lake, traveling along the extending coast, slightly northeast, covering 250 miles before reaching the rivermouth of another Great River.

The Great River surged with abundant water. Chiwaco stood at the bow, estimating slightly, he knew the river was at least two miles wide and stretched as far as the eye could see. Judging by the rushing flow, the upper part of the river must pass through a vast region.

"Tikalo, what river is this?"

"Oh! You mean this river? It's something extraordinary!"

The Maya merchant Tikalo glanced for a moment and replied with a smile.

"This is the Rio Champoton! The upper reaches of the grass river twist continuously to the east, extending hundreds of miles, even connecting to the desolate central basin. This waterway, during the Maya Classical period, was a golden waterway, allegedly over a thousand miles long. Many goods from the Snake City Calakmul were transported along this route all the way to the coast, then turned north. However, after the divine disaster, the upper reaches of the grass river gradually dried and were cut off, leaving only this downstream half... Even now, many Maya tribes settle or hunt along this freshwater-rich river."

"Settle or hunt?"

Chiwaco was slightly taken aback. Could there be hunter tribes in this rainfall-abundant Yucatan Peninsula? He was a bit puzzled and asked further.

"This Long River is so wide and long, with plenty of freshwater. The land along the shore looks flat and fertile enough to support tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of people farming. Why are tribes hunting in such fertile places that are still desolate? ... Isn't that wasting this good land and water!"

"This... who knows..."

Tikalo pondered hard but had no answer. In the mysterious Yucatan Peninsula, there are too many unknown questions and baffling phenomena, which no one can explain.

"Actually, now the central basin also has abundant rivers and rainfall. It used to support millions of ordinary people! However, after the divine disaster, various tribes flee from there, turning the fertile land into a green desert, and it's still unchanged... Maybe all this is the will of the Divine!"

All unknowns are attributed to the Great Power of the Divine! This is the simplest and most irrefutable answer. Chiwaco scratched his head, his eyes flickering, and remained silent.

Tikalo observed for a while, then pointed southeast from the river mouth. His expression became slightly solemn, and he spoke earnestly.

"Captain Chi, look, four or five miles to the southeast, there's a small town. If I remember correctly, it should be Chakan Putum, 'an area rich in grass,' the Great Prairie City!"

"Chakan Putum, Great Prairie City?"

Hearing this name, Chiwaco was taken aback and looked around. Along the journey, the shores were swamps and rainforests, but in this area, it was full of long grass and sparse trees, suddenly broadening the view. Deer leaped between the long grass, birds paused on the sparse trees, and vitality was everywhere.

At the edge of his vision, the old militia diligently searched and finally found a simple small town. This small town was very low and small; it was more a village than a town. On the north side of the town, near the river, there were a few sparse farmlands, not yet in the planting season, overgrown with weeds. Around the small town was a shallow wooden fence, with a low temple at the center. From miles away, one could vaguely see some wandering tribespeople, with unknown intents.

"It's really strange..."

Chiwaco stroked his chin, thought for a while, then asked.

"Tikalo, along the way, it's all forests. Why is the land suddenly open here? Speaking of rainfall and rivers, it shouldn't be much different from the south..."

"Uh..."

Faced with such an odd query, even a well-read person like Tikalo was momentarily stunned. He pondered for a while, then answered uncertainly.

"Maybe it's the divine power of the Moon Mother Goddess or the Rain Divine? This river often floods during the rainy season, submerging the surrounding forests..."

Chiwaco shook his head, denying it.

"But the Hidden Snake River and the Red River we passed earlier also flood often. Yet, the forests there are lush."

"Then perhaps it's the divine power of the Wind God, bringing hurricanes during summer, destroying the large trees along the way. I remember the summer winds here are strong, affecting the coast."

"Along our route, the summer wind has been strong. The Vastec land also faced hurricanes, yet the trees are still tall."

"Hmm... It could also be the manipulation of the Earth God. There are deep wells in this area that spew black oil. We used that black oil when repairing the ship. Where black oil emerges, trees hardly grow."

"No, in Vastec as well, there's plenty of black oil..."

"...Oh! Then it must be the divine disaster from six hundred years ago!"

Facing a series of questions from the old militia, Tikalo's divine and wise mind couldn't withstand the test. He couldn't help but reminisce about the simplistic Jaguar Warrior Olosh back then. Despite both being "simplistic," the Jaguar Warrior was indeed genuine, whereas the old militia in front of him was a total fake!

"Divine disaster? What exactly is the divine disaster?"

"Uh... the divine disaster, I don't know either. It could be decades of floods, it could be decades of droughts, it could be decades of wars, and it could also be..."

At this point, Tikalo paused slightly. He spoke with an internal fear, revealing the final, despair-inducing record of the ancestors.

"...the rain of stars falling from the heavens!"

"Hiss! Rain of stars?"

On hearing this, the old militia widened his eyes, gasping.

"How could the stars in the sky fall down?"

"Because the Divine got angry, the Divine Descendants all died, and the stars fell!"

Tikalo pursed his lips, recalling with difficulty for a while, then spoke in a low voice.

"The exact process, not much was told by the ancestors. There is just that epic..."

Hearing such an exclusive piece of information, the flagship crew leaned forward to listen to Tikalo's story. Tikalo hung his head low, his words deep and laden with the icy chill of death.

"...The enraged All Gods dropped the burning stars. Stars fell like heavenly fire, igniting everything impure! Forests burned, farmlands burned, city-states also burned. After the splendid burning, there was overwhelming dust and unspeakable cold. White ashes fell, corn would all die, and people, bare-bodied, froze stiff in the temples... That was the most terrible divine disaster, at its violent peak, it could annihilate the entire world!..."

"O Chief Divine! Please shield me, grant me light and warmth!"

Upon hearing such terrifying descriptions, Puap shivered, praying loudly. Priest Tomate also lowered his eyes, pondering silently. Only the old militia thought for a while, confusion once again surfacing in his old eyes.

"Tikalo, the heavenly fire burns, releasing a great deal of heat. But then, why does your ancestor say that after the heavenly fire, there would be a terrible cold? There must be some secret in this..."

"Uh! ...Captain Chi, your immense wisdom surpasses mine. This question, I... I have no answer."

Tikalo's mouth twitched, he bent his head, showing a wry smile.

"Perhaps, you could ask my ancestors in your dreams..."

"Hiss! Ancestral protection! Quick, look at the shore!"

Just at this moment, an urgent call rang out from the eagle-eyed Mountain Bird, filled with anxiety. His interest in the southern tribe's divine disaster wasn't much. After all, the Northern Continent's winter was full of white divine disasters, even lasting for half a year!

His gaze had been carefully observing the southeastern village. In his eagle-like eyes, he could clearly see a group of wandering tribespeople stopped abruptly, astonishingly looking towards the shore. Then, like rabbits, that group of tribespeople sped off, rushing back to report to the Great Prairie City.

Soon after, a green smoke rose! And thousands of tribal warriors, holding long spears and carrying darts, poured out from behind the Great Prairie City, howling as if packs of hunting hounds had spotted their prey.

"Four hundred, eight hundred, one thousand two hundred, one thousand six hundred, two thousand!..."

Dark Snake widened his eyes, desperately estimating, then shouted loudly.

"Ah! Over two thousand tribal warriors are converging on the fleet! And they have more than a hundred canoes!..."

"Damn it! Where did this Maya tribe come from? Moving as fast as the wind, gathering so quickly!"

Huitu Puapu was dumbfounded, incredulous. He hesitated for several breaths before immediately blowing the conch around his neck, shrieking loudly.

"Everyone! Armor up, arm yourselves with bows, set up long spears, prepare for battle!"

Chapter 1060: Second Kingdom Exploration, Maya's Barbarians

"No! Disengage, do not engage these tribes!"

The plains were open, with two thousand Maya tribal warriors howling, running, surging as swiftly as a tide. A hundred small canoes flowed downstream, rushing towards the rivermouth. The old militia Chiwaco observed for a few breaths, estimated the imminent battle, and immediately made a decision.

"Signal with the flag, leave the riverbank. Row five miles west, retreat into the near sea!"

Upon hearing this, Puap was slightly taken aback, thought for a moment, then nodded in agreement. Soon, the retreat flags rose at the bow. The flagship turned first, with over forty rowers exerting themselves simultaneously, rowing desperately, turning swiftly. The remaining six longships followed closely, swiftly rowing into the distance.

The large group of Maya tribal warriors rushed to the shore, only stopping when they saw the seven large ships move away. Dozens of canoes pursued another two or three miles, until they drove the invaders off the coast, then turned back again, patrolling at the rivermouth in vigilance. Hundreds of Maya warriors raised stone spears, waving small shields, mimicking wolf howls, intimidating the kingdom fleet in the near sea. Large groups of stone-throwers and javelin throwers laid out a loose formation, taking high positions, all ready to shoot. Clearly, these Maya tribes were very familiar with combat.

The two sides faced each other across five miles of sea. One side was abuzz and bustling, the other silent and vigilant. Chiwaco squinted his eyes, watching for a long while, but unfortunately, the distance was too far, and he couldn't see clearly. He thought for a moment, then called over the ship's best-eyed Shanbird.

"Shanbird, can you see clearly?"

"Yes, Captain."

"What can you see clearly?"

"Opposite, there is a group of armored samurai, surrounding a long-headed divine descendant, who has come to the shore... He raised his head, he is looking at us!"

"Uh!... "

The old militia squinted, looking strenuously for a while, only seeing a blur of people, unable to make out any divine descendant. His vision resolution was roughly one two-thousand-five-hundredth,

meaning he could only see about a meter-sized object from five miles away. As for Shanbird's vision resolution...

"Alright!"

The old militia scratched his head, looked at Tikalo pondering beside him, and asked solemnly.

"Tikalo, which Maya tribe is in this great grassland city? Why did they proactively attack us?"

"Captain Chi, they are the Putun, the fiercest Maya tribe on the Yucatan Peninsula, the barbarians among the Maya. They occupy the banks of the Great Grass River and this vast savanna. They are half agrarian, half hunter-gatherers, frequently moving camps. They know no social distinction, even among the commoners, many tribal warriors emerge."

Tikalo answered seriously, his expression solemn.

"The Great Grass River basin is connected to the Central Basin. After the divine disaster, many divine descendant tribes fled north. The first tribe to follow the Great Grass River and flee here were the Itza, led by the Heavenly Serpent Divine Descendant, from around the divine capital Tikal. Then, the Tutul Xiu people, under the leadership of the Xi Wu family of Snake City, also migrated here, driving away the Itza. The Itza then moved north, conquering Uuc City, which became the predecessor of Chichen Itza. Afterward, the Tutul Xiu moved north and established Uxmal City."

"Both divine descendant tribes shifted their centers of rule but continued to fight over this area. New tribes occasionally appeared here, but none could stand against the two divine descendant tribes... Until hundreds of years ago, the last of the barbaric Putun tribe, over a hundred thousand strong, migrated out of the Central Basin!"

As Tikalo spoke, an expression of barely concealed resentment appeared on his face. It was the instinctive aversion from a Maya divine descendant to the disorder and overturning of social hierarchy.

"These Putun tribes, who knows what they experienced in the basin after the divine disaster. They lost the heritage of divine descendants, the social order completely collapsed, and the knowledge of the divines was lost as well. They couldn't farm, couldn't build cities, became a nation of warriors wandering

and looting, turning extraordinarily barbaric. Though they were only over a hundred thousand, they could once organize tens of thousands of tribal warriors to attack the civilized Maya city-states, eating anything!... "

"The Tutul Xiu and the Itza were both forced to abandon their towns here, retreating to the northern lowlands. This vast savanna was hence occupied by the Putun. Of course, centuries later, they regained knowledge of farming and building, but did both poorly, still occasionally hunter-gathering."

Hearing these unfamiliar tribal names made Chiwaco a bit dizzy. He rubbed his head, thought for a while, then summarized.

"It seems they are like tribes of the wilderness, very skilled in fighting, but not much else... So, they did not attack us for the Lake Gem on our fleet. They simply attacked any invader they see?"

"Hmm... very likely!"

Tikalo touched his head, nodding in agreement.

"This group of Putun is like a pack of mad dogs and has terrible relations with most Maya tribes. No matter which fleet lands here, they will be attacked by them!"

In fact, it is worth mentioning that the future battle achievements of the Putun tribe also include defeating the Spaniards. Twenty-eight years later, the first Spanish explorer, Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, set sail from Cuba with three large ships and discovered the Yucatan Peninsula for the first time. He brought one to two hundred sailors and soldiers, landing first in the north of the peninsula, claiming to be a Divine Messenger, and was warmly welcomed by the local Maya city-states. Then, he sailed along the coastline of the peninsula, heading south, into the heart of Mexico. The villages along the coast, seeing their distinctive divine faces, were very enthusiastic and friendly, actively providing food and water.

Until he landed at the mouth of the large grass river to replenish freshwater, he met the hunting Putun tribe head-on. Over a thousand tribal warriors attacked the Spanish exploration team, directly killing sixty people with stone spears and darts, injuring over a hundred. Explorer Captain Hernández, wearing heavy armor, reportedly suffered 33 spear wounds and was severely injured before escaping back to the

ship. The fleet then fled desperately with favorable winds, eventually reaching Florida. Several days later, Hernández, due to his grievous injuries, died near Havana in Cuba.

The second exploration captain to succeed him was Juan de Grijalva. He brought more manpower and made more thorough preparations, landing again at the mouth of the large grass river. The Spanish fleet paid the price of a hundred casualties, killing more than two hundred tribal warriors, and shot dead the leader of the Putun tribe, causing their scatter...

Afterward, came the third captain, Hernan Cortes. The Putun tribe, having suffered a previous loss, gathered thousands of warriors waiting for the Spaniards to come ashore. However, Cortes did not stay there to directly confront the Putun tribe but proceeded forward to directly reach the heart of Mexico. There, he would meet the fate of the Totonac people who devoutly worshipped the Feathered Serpent, the Tlaxcalans eagerly seeking allies, and the internally divided Mexica people whose king was powerless to rule.

Of course, none of this had happened yet. The people of the kingdom fleet could not know, nor even imagine. Mayan merchant Tikalo merely tiptoed, looking at the gathered and unyielding Putun tribal warriors on the shore, and made a suggestion.

"Respected Captain Chiwaco, we can leave here and continue north! One hundred and sixty miles north from the mouth of the large grass river is the Brocade Snake City of the Brocade Snake Clan. The Brocade Snake Clan has trade relations with various tribes, especially friendly with the Canul Family. Our trading group has traded with them many times, and the fleet can dock there for supplies."

"Leaving the river mouth, heading north one hundred and sixty miles, and replenish at Brocade Snake City?"

Chiwaco pondered for a moment and nodded slightly. Caution is his instinct, and he would never engage in meaningless conflicts.

"In that case, we shall..."

"Chief Divine's protection! Wait a moment, Captain Chiwaco."

Priest Tomate stood at the bow of the ship, observing for a long time, and had some thoughts. This is a primitive and simple Maya tribe, completely different from other cunning Maya city-states that have lost their way! ... With this in mind, he suddenly spoke up, interrupting the old militia's orders.

"Tikalo, what deity does this Putun tribe worship?"

"Uh... The deity of the Putun tribe?"

Upon hearing this, Tikalo thought hard for a moment and replied uncertainly.

"They seem to have a very chaotic belief system, roaming around and without building large temples. Their divine descendants have probably lost their inheritance and no longer know their clan's Chief Divine..."

"As expected!"

Priest Tomate clasped his scriptures tightly, a fanatical smile appearing on his face. Seeing this smile, Tikalo's heart immediately trembled. A sense of foreboding surged within him instantly.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Captain Chiwaco, please give me a small boat! I want to go ashore and plant the seeds of the Chief Divine's faith in the hearts of their leader!"

"What! You want to go ashore?!"

Hearing this, Chiwaco jumped in shock.

"Priest Tomate, it's extremely dangerous ashore! The wolves are ready to pounce and bite, and you're rushing up in the heat of the moment? ... No way!"

"It is possible! The light of the Chief Divine illuminates me! I am under His protection, and I will spread His glory, there will be no mishap!"

Priest Tomate stood tall, eyes shining bright, face full of fearlessness and determination.

"Captain Chiwaco, please send me ashore! I will go alone, without the need for anyone's accompaniment! ... Oh, no way!"

Priest Tomate paused. He turned his head, pointing to Tikalo, who was filled with terror and retreating repeatedly.

"I still need a good translator...him!"