

Civilization 1081

Chapter 1081: The Second Kingdom Expedition, Brutal Slaughter!

"Swish, swish, swish!"

Over a hundred fully drawn greatbows, slightly lifted, released arrows of bronze. The fierce rain of arrows, carrying the whistle of death, swiftly struck!

"Ah! Ugh! Hahaha!..."

A dozen Xi Wu warriors at the front were instantly pierced by copper arrows, screaming as they fell to the ground! These were arrows the Maya warriors had never seen in thousands of years, able to penetrate their wooden armor straight through! With a slight disruption in formation, the Xi Wu warriors called for divine protection and continued to charge forward.

"Swish, swish, swish!"

A few breaths later, the second volley of feathered arrows once again fiercely attacked, killing another dozen warriors amidst screams. By this time, the shouting Xi Wu warriors had already gotten within thirty paces, starting to throw darts. The Prepecha archers remained calm, aiming at the vital points of the Maya warriors, releasing the most precise third volley of arrows!

"Swish! Swish, swish!"

Loud, tragic screams instantly rose from the charging formation! As many as twenty or thirty Xi Wu warriors were struck in the neck, falling dead. More Xi Wu warriors were injured by arrows, giving out cries of anger and fear. Three rounds of arrows in mere moments. The glaring red already sprinkled like "demon tails," blossoming into flowers of blood on the desolate earth.

"Heavenly Serpent Divine! Please protect us! Slay the enemy!"

The warriors of the Xiu family shouted prayers, raising their weapons in charge, feet never halting. They had never faced such shooting before engagement. Yet the momentum from years of victorious battles

still maintained their morale. Large groups of Xi Wu warriors charged within twenty paces, shouting as they threw javelins and darts from their hands!

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

The sky filled with whistling obsidian javelins, carrying a heavy piercing sound. Hui Tu Puapu's expression tightened as he quickly raised the copper-plated shield on his left arm.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The violent impacts sounded several times, finally breaking through the copper surface, piercing the wooden board inside. Puapu's right hand sank, forcing him to drop the shield embedded with a javelin. Then, three more short-pointed darts hit his copper armor, causing sharp pain in his chest!

"Damn it! Cursed Mayans!"

Puapu gritted his teeth, cursing angrily. Only then did he realize that he was wearing the captain's copper armor today, wearing a striking eagle feather crown, looking like an important leader. The Huitu warrior spat twice, threw down the big bow in his hand, picked up the bronze spear in front of him, and shouted fiercely.

"Archers fall back and continue shooting! Spearmen charge forward, stab these mad dogs! Chief Divine's protection, fight for the divine!"

"Chief Divine's protection, fight for the divine!"

More than a hundred Prepecha warriors shouted in unison, splitting into bow and spear teams. Then, dozens of kingdom warriors with long spears, accompanied by fifty Vastec warriors and over a hundred Putun warriors, shouted and launched a desperate charge!

"Heavenly Serpent Divine's protection!"

The opposing Xi Wu warriors also formed a long line, facing each other, raising obsidian spears, charging equally fiercely. Twenty paces, ten paces, five paces!... The two spear-bearing teams charged directly at each other under the blood-red sunset!

"Bang! Bang!"

Two hundred gleaming bronze spears, reflecting cold light under the sunset, traced low arcs, then fiercely pierced into the wooden armor on the chests of the Xi Wu warriors, continuing to penetrate with a "thunk." An equal number of obsidian spears, also slanted and forcefully thrust, struck the leather armor on the waists of the kingdom warriors, creating a grating "sizzle."

"Thunk! Sizzle!"

Warriors from both sides gritted their teeth, stabbing out their spears, forcefully pushing forward! At this moment, it was up to the divine and the armor on their bodies to decide each other's life and death!

"Snap!..."

Dozens of sturdy wooden shafts even broke during the fierce combat. This fiercest charge, lasting only a dozen breaths, directly claimed the lives of hundreds of warriors! Warriors from both sides, with reddened eyes, abandoned broken spears, continuing to fight each other. The cruel casualties, every moment, continued to accumulate!

"Oh, Heavenly Serpent Divine! This, this is impossible!"

Xiutur raised his shield, tightly guarded by his escorts, watching the slaughter on the front lines from dozens of paces away. His eyes never leaving the scene, he watched for a while, his lips trembling with pain, as if cut by a knife.

The opposing archery was astoundingly powerful; three volleys had taken fifty elite family members. While the family warriors' javelin throw only took down a dozen. As for the recent charge, only thirty or so tribal warriors from the other side fell, while twice as many from their side had fallen!

"Over a hundred! The casualties of over a hundred family warriors! These are the elite warriors who fought alongside me, pressing down the Canul people!"

Xiutur clenched his teeth, feeling as if his heart was bleeding. Yet, in the fierce melee ahead, the Nava warriors had already discarded their long spears and drawn the bronze axes from their waists, fiercely hacking away.

"Haha! How exhilarating!"

The Silver Raven warrior Osprey swung his battle axe, striking the side neck of a Maya warrior and pulling hard. Warm, bright red splattered over his head and face. Osprey licked his bloody lips and let out a carefree howl, pouncing toward another young warrior.

"Awooo! Such a fast axe, chop your head off!"

"Ancestral witness! It's really fast!"

Mokai wielded the bronze axe, cutting down two city-state warriors at close range, feeling quite pleased. He excelled in using long spears and had rarely used the Mexica people's axes, only just beginning to explore their use. But at this moment, both sides' warriors were already engaged in a fierce mêlée. In such conditions, the short-handled bronze axe was the most useful!

"Haha! Fast and sharp, the city-state people's wooden armor is just like grass!"

Mokai grinned widely and swung his axe backwards, again hitting the side shoulder of a Maya warrior. Then, he pulled forcefully, causing the opponent to stagger and painfully expose his neck. The fierce Putun warrior raised his bronze axe and, aiming for the neck of the city-state man, brought it down swiftly and forcefully!

"Swoosh!..."

The glaring bright red gradually pooled into a bloodbath in front of the small temple pyramid. The warriors engaged in intense combat, their bodies entangled as they fell, as if sacrifices for the underground demon. Most of these sacrifices, whether dead or dying, carried the blood of the Maya.

"Heavenly Serpent Divine! Warriors! My warriors!..."

Xiutur's eyes were bloodshot, watching in disbelief as elite family warriors fell one after another.

"The family warriors, always known for their combat prowess, dominating the Lowland Maya! How could they be like this against the western Nava people?..."

After the charge to the death, it became an even more brutal close combat. Although the Xiu family's warriors had superior numbers, they were struggling to recover from their disadvantage. The fighting Nava warriors, even when struck multiple times by stone spears, continued to fight upright. While the Xiu family warriors, once hit by a bronze axe, were destined for severe injury and death!

More importantly, the enemy warriors were shouting divine slogans with a fearless courage, unwavering and not retreating a single step! Meanwhile, although the Xiu family warriors were more in number, their morale was visibly dropping, steadily suppressed by the opponent.

"Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!"

Dozens of kingdom archers ascended the steps of the small temple, taking a position at the high ground. Then, they began methodically sniping the Xiu family warriors, killing over a dozen in no time. With the precise rainfall of arrows, the Xiu warriors, who had roamed the Lowland Maya, began to show signs of instability, their roots shaken.

"Damn! These Nava warriors who colluded with the Mayapan are so fierce!"

Xiutur bit his lip hard and threw a fierce glance at the rear. The remnants of the Mayapan at the back, despite numbering three to four hundred, were of ordinary combat strength. Two hundred Xiu warriors easily overwhelmed them. But the Nava warriors at the front lines were the real formidable enemies!

The battle-savvy Prince Xi Wu widened his eyes, observing the Nava line. The enemy's central army consisted of fifty heavily armored Nava warriors, the left wing was several dozen Nava tribal warriors, and the right wing had even more Putun barbarians. From the battle situation, the weakest point appeared to be...

"May the Heavenly Serpent Divine protect us! Follow me, circle to the front line's right wing! Crush the Nava left wing!"

Xiutur looked at the hundred most battle-proven trusted aides at his command and swiftly made a decision. He raised the long spear in his right hand and lifted the wooden shield with his left, personally leading his trusted aides into battle ahead.

"The Nava forces have reached their limit, and there are still enemies landing from the ships. Deploying these hundred trusted aides to the right wing and targeting the enemy's weak point will be the most decisive strike!"

"The most decisive strike...."

The divine archers Kexi and Amphibia, stationed high atop the small temple, had been waiting with their greatbows in hand. They fixed their sharp Eagle Eyes on the Maya prince, wearing a feather crown, wooden armor, and an overlayer of Serpent war clothes. Until Xiutur got within fifty paces, raised his wooden shield, and shouted commands, while the trusted aides around him fanned out preparing to attack...

"It's now!"

The two divine archers exchanged glances, simultaneously cried out in their hearts. Then, they squinted their eyes, unhesitatingly drew their greatbows, nocked copper arrows, aimed, and released!

"Whiz! Whiz!"

Chapter 1082: The Second Kingdom Expedition, Blood-Red Earth, and the Maniacal Laughter of Victory

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

The battlefield was clamorous, shadows flickered, and the Samurai clashed their weapons endlessly. Xiutur, clad in Wooden Armor and wrapped in War Clothes, was raising his shield while shouting, commanding the Personal Guard Warriors to attack. A sharp sound of the wind suddenly assailed from his left side! He turned his head abruptly, seeing only the blurred shadow of an arrow, and then his chest and side were simultaneously hit!

"Sizzle... Thud!"

Two sharp Bronze Feathered Arrows, with immense power and precision, struck together, piercing through the War Clothes adorned with the Divine Rune of the Serpent. The arrow at his chest was slightly obstructed by the Wooden Armor, going only half an inch into the flesh. However, the one at his side hit the weakest connection of the armor, piercing all the way through, sinking a full inch and a half into the flesh!

"Ugh!... Ah!..."

Xiutur let out a wretched scream as intense pain from his chest and side simultaneously assaulted him, penetrating deep into his viscera. He struggled to lower his head, incredulously staring at the long and short arrows embedded in his body. In that instant, the shadow of death loomed over his heart, closer than ever before!

"I... is this? This is!... A despicable ambush by the Navarre!"

Xiutur felt dizzy, whispering lowly. The gushing blood flowed out from his body and accumulated within. In the face of deadly blades, even the most revered Serpent Divine Descendant was just mortal flesh.

"Oh, Heavenly Serpent! Please protect me!..."

Moments later, Prince Xi Wu's hands relaxed, and both his shield and Stone Spear fell to the ground simultaneously. Then, his legs went limp, unable to hold himself up any longer, and he fell on his back to the ground amid the panic-stricken shouts of his trusted aides.

"Ah! Quickly! Quickly! Stop the Prince's bleeding!"

"Pull out the arrows!"

"The arrows are too deep to pull out!"

"We need to go to the Stone-Cut City, to find the Temple's priest!"

"Damn those Navarre! Kill them!"

The chaotic shouts erupted from the right wing of the Maya formation, filled with shock, anger, and panic. Dozens of Xi Wu's Personal Guards surged forward in unison, surrounding Prince Xiutur, frantically attempting to provide aid. Meanwhile, other warriors on the right wing also turned to watch, faces filled with unease. Just moments ago, they held the upper hand in the attack, but now the right wing of Xi Wu had suddenly come to a halt, plunged into disarray.

"The Prince is still bleeding!"

"How could this happen? How could this happen!"

"Break the arrow shaft! Bind it from the outside!"

"No good, the bleeding won't stop! It won't stop!"

"Where's the healing medicine? Bring the bleeding-stopping herbs! Hurry!"

Xi Wu's Personal Guards, having fought many battles, were long accustomed to life and death. If it were an ordinary Family Warrior, a leading captain, or even themselves injured or killed in combat, they would merely consider it the arrangement of the God of Destiny, never reaching such chaos.

But this was the most revered Serpent Divine Descendant, their commanding leader, the incarnation of the Divine in the world! He was also the second most noble within the Xiu Family, only beneath Clan Leader Xiupan! The sacred order was ingrained deeply, akin to divine law. The trusted aides couldn't

even imagine, if they returned with the news of the Prince's fall, what a furious Clan Leader Xiupan might do back in the Capital City of Mani!

"Good! Chief Divine protect us! Excellently done!"

Huitu Puapu, hearing the cries, looked and only saw the fallen Feather Crown Leader and the chaotic Maya warriors. Holding a blood-dripping Bronze Axe, he stood upon a corpse, breathing heavily and feeling exceptionally thrilled. Not caring whether the Mayans could understand, he pointed towards the left wing, shouting loudly.

"The enemy leader has fallen! Killed in battle! They're defeated, defeated!"

The disordered shouts echoed within the warring formations, filled with the excited and enthusiastic Navajo and the terrified and desperate Maya. Both sides continued the chaotic slaughter for a moment, with precise Feathered Arrows continuously flying in, taking away the warriors of the Xi Wu family. Soon, the chaos started spreading from the Maya's right wing, eventually causing the entire military formation to falter!

"Oh, Heavenly Serpent! The Prince has fallen! The Prince has died!"

The Central Army's warriors of Xi Wu turned around, seeing the leader of the Divine Descendant fallen, their faces filled with shock, nearly reaching the brink of collapse. The Prepecha Warriors, fierce and seasoned, clad in Copper Armor and Leather Armor, wielding Great Shield Copper Axes, had already been pressing down hard on them.

Arrows from above continuously rained down, stealing away the warriors' lives.

At this moment, watching the Divine Descendant fall, the warriors of Xi Wu's Central Army were overwhelmed with shock, unable to hold their ground any longer. They turned their heads to flee towards the Stone-Cut City in the rear!

"Good! Good! The enemy army has collapsed! The Mayans have collapsed! Charge with me!"

Huitu Warrior Puapu beamed with joy, shouting repeatedly. Relying on his Heavy Armor, he led dozens of Central Army warriors to charge again towards the Kingdom's right wing. Mokai also led the Putun Tribe's warriors, fearless of death, charging at the chaotic enemies. Xi Wu Family's left wing had another dozen fallen in battle, the remaining Maya Warriors then collapsed in a stormy retreat!

"Ancestor's blessing! Kill, kill! Slay these retreating City-State people! Roar!"

Short Spear Warrior Mokai's eyes were red with excitement as he let out a triumphant howl. Then, he and the equally chaotic yelling Putun warriors pursued the fleeing soldiers of the Xi Wu family, mercilessly hacking and stabbing at their backs. After battling for a brief period, with dozens sacrificed, they had long found their fighting stride, focusing solely on the enemies before them!

"Haha! Haha! Only a spurt of reckless bravery at the start, they are truly paper mache Maya Warriors!"

Puapu laughed heartily, feeling the protection of the War God, and unstoppable bravery. He surveyed the battlefield again, looking at the enemy's right wing starting to scatter. There, dozens of loyal Xi Wu's trusted aides, flustered, attempted to shield the gravely injured Prince, striving to retreat towards the rear.

"Retreat! Quick, retreat! Fall back to Stone-Cut City!"

With the leader gravely injured and near death, the lines completely collapsed. Xi Wu's trusted aides had only one choice: to take the Prince and retreat back to the Stone-Cut City fifty miles in the rear! Stone-Cut City had low walls, Xi Wu warriors, and civilians who had fallen back, along with reinforcements from the Tail Feather Clan. Most importantly, it had priests knowledgeable in medical skills, and maybe a chance to save the Prince!

This chaotic battle was truly a sudden and inexplicable onslaught. Even if they won with bloodshed, as long as the prince perished, upon returning to the Capital City, they feared becoming sacrifices offered by the Clan Leader!

"Hmm? Trying to escape?!"

Huitu Puapu's expression stiffened, and anger suddenly ignited in his eyes. He fought this battle desperately, all for this Serpent Divine Descendant brought right to him! And now, the other side actually wanted to escape?!

The ferocious Huitu warrior gritted his teeth, eyes filled with murderous intent. He looked around and harshly shouted, gathering the surrounding Armored Warriors.

"Chief Divine protection! Prepetcha's eagles, charge with me! Decapitate the enemy leader, and all will be rewarded with wealth and promoted by two warrior levels!"

"Chief Divine protection! Decapitate the enemy leader!"

The Armored Warriors held their blood-dripping Bronze Axes, faces slick with sweat, mixed with the blood of enemies. They prayed devoutly, shouted the slogans of the Chief Divine, their faces full of intense murderous intent, like a burning flame!

"Roar! Charge with me!"

Puapu shouted, leading forty to fifty warriors, ferociously rushing towards Prince Xi Wu's position. By this time, he was as courageous as if a Black Wolf had possessed him, with only an unforgettable divine revelation in his mind.

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

"Chief Divine protection!"

"Heavenly Serpent Divine protection!"

Dozens of Xi Wu's trusted aides protected the severely wounded prince, unable to escape vigorously, and were quickly caught up. They summoned their last strength and fought fiercely with the pursuing Navajo Warriors, desperately defending the Divine Descendant behind them.

"Kill!"

Puapu let out a fierce shout, charging head-on, beheading a Maya Warrior. Then, he forwent defense, let out another tiger-like roar, and struck another's chest.

"Die!"

The ferocious Huitu warrior wielded his axe, killing another, striking until the axe became blunted, finally reaching the fallen Xiutur. Seeing their main general so valiant, the Prepecha Warriors fought fearlessly, using Copper Armor to resist Stone Spears, killing all the surrounding Xi Wu's trusted aides!

"Haha! Serpent Divine Descendant! Serpent Divine Descendant!"

Puapu looked up and laughed heartily, gazing at the sun in the sky, his face full of undisguised ecstasy. Then he lowered his head, heedless, drawing a dagger. The severely wounded Xiutur weakly opened his eyes, only to see a frenzied, grinning Nava face, like a Coyote ready to devour him!

"No! No!... I have gems, I have ransom!... cough, cough! I am the first prince of the Xiu Family, the most esteemed Serpent Divine Descendant!..."

"Puapu! Spare the Divine Descendant as a captive!"

A few dozen steps away, Priest Tomate also wore Leather Armor, wielding a Bronze Axe, covered in bright red. He hurried towards them, shouting aloud.

"Spare his life!..."

"Hahaha! Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood can lift the Divine Eagle Curse!... It takes the hot blood of the heart!..."

Puapu grinned broadly, heedless, appearing frenzied. He raised the dagger in his hand, plunged it down forcefully, and then made a savage slash to both sides.

Unparalleled pain struck, and Xiutur's eyes suddenly widened, like a fish being vivisected alive, spitting out his last frothy blood.

"Father... I listened to you... died in..."

"Hahaha! Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood! Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood!... Gulp! Gulp!"

Puapu suddenly bowed, lying over Xiutur's chest. He gulped, his eyes blood-red. Moments later, he lifted his head, his face covered in warm liquid, with red staining his lips. It was the antidote to the curse, warm, metallic, and with a frenzy that freed his inner demons.

At that moment, Puapu looked up at the dim sky, laughed loudly. He felt light all over, as if he had instantly shed a heavy burden, losing the most deeply hidden nightmare that had weighed on him for years.

"Haha! My curse is finally lifted! Hummingbird chief, Divine Eagle royal family, I betrayed you, and you cursed me! I repay you now with the most esteemed Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood, now we're even! Even!... hahaha! hahahaha!"

Puapu laughed carelessly. His tiger-wolf-like laughter echoed across the corpse-strewn battlefield, reaching the ears of the Mayan merchants. Tikalo, a Mayan merchant, sat slumped at the back of the battlefield, utterly disheveled, face smeared with blood, his luxurious noble robe torn, his arm injured. He saw the distant scene and laughed joyfully out loud,

"Haha! Heavenly Serpent Divine Blood, Serpent Divine Descendant... Serpent Divine Descendant indeed! This is Prince Xiutur, Clan Leader Xiupan's heir, and he died here! Hahaha! This taste of revenge is sweet as honey!... hahahaha!"

Tikalo laughed maniacally, sitting on the ground, flailing his arms. He roared in the ancient Maya language, pronouncing Maya curses, and then laughed hysterically. As he laughed, tears flowed from his eyes, he cried with abandon, and then laughed again, even more frenziedly than Puapu.

"Chief Divine protection! Grant us divinely favored victory!"

"Ancestors witness! The Putun Tribe vanquished the enemy and sacrificed them!"

"Roar roar! Haha! Roar roar! Haha!"

The bloody battle was won triumphantly; hundreds of captives were executed. The Warriors of the Kingdom and the Tribe's warriors cheered for victory, laughed excitedly. The sunset descended from the sky, leaving the earth blood-red and somber. Only the fervent and intense laughter, like a frenzied flame, burned on the land of the Mayans!

Chapter 1083: The Second Kingdom Expedition—Who Are You?

The divine lowered its red eyes, gazing upon the blood-soaked earth. The harsh battle had finally ended, with the Putun warriors returning with severed heads. Over three hundred bodies of Xiu warriors lay scattered, stretching southward. The Kingdom's warriors raised their weapons, cheering and shouting. They laughed and prayed, celebrating a great victory after the bloodshed!

"Praise the Supreme Main God! We fight for the divine, we die for the divine, winning the victory granted by the War God!"

After praying, the Kingdom's warriors bowed their heads, beginning to count their fleet's casualties, saving their own wounded, and then sacrificed the captured enemies. This short but fierce battle claimed over ten Prepecha Warriors, over ten Silver Raven warriors, and over thirty Putun warriors. In just a few quarters of an hour, over sixty lives were lost!

In the distant lands of Maya, away from the alliance, the Kingdom warriors would show no mercy for any captured enemies.

"Haha! The blessing of the Chief Divine! This is the leader of the Maya Divine Descendant! I, Puapu, charged into the midst of hundreds of Maya warriors and personally severed his head!"

Puapu was elated, shouting loudly. He was covered in blood, wearing copper armor stained red, holding aloft the head of Prince Xiutur, boasting about his wartime achievements in front of the warriors!

"Blessings of the Chief Divine! Captain Puapu, you led the charge several times, your bravery was unmatched, as if the Black Wolf General was within you!"

The Kingdom warriors thumped their chests, respectfully saluting their captain. The Kingdom honored its warriors most, and today, Captain Puapu's courageous performance truly impressed all the warriors. Even Silver Raven warrior Osprey and Short Spear warrior Mokai were wholeheartedly convinced by him!

"Haha! You all fought well too! Once back on the ship, I'll give you each a bag of gemstones! When the fleet returns to the Kingdom, there will surely be great rewards from His Highness!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise His Highness! Praise the Captain!"

The Kingdom warriors praised continuously, shouting excitedly. Only Chief God Priest Tomate kept a stern face, presiding over a simple post-battle prayer.

"...The blessing of the Chief Divine! Praise Them, granting us victory in battle!"

Next, without a word, Priest Tomate stood before the small pyramid temple, gazing at the "allies" converging at the edge of the Southeast Jungle.

The Maya tribes emerging from the southeast, with the cooperation of the ship's tribal warriors, had already routed the rear guard of Xiu warriors. They dispatched over a hundred people, looting over the bodies of the Xiu warriors, collecting everything from damaged wooden armor to broken stone spears, unwilling to discard anything. If they encountered a dying Xiu warrior, they mercilessly slit their throats, leaving no survivors!

At this moment, led by over ten noble warriors, the remaining over two hundred tribal warriors were quickly approaching the Kingdom's forces. Most of these tribal warriors were bare-chested, holding simple stone spears. As for the leading noble warriors, they wore only crude wooden armor pieces on their front and back, topped with old war clothes marked with a large snake pattern. Compared to the warriors of the Xiu family, this equipment was pathetically poor!

"Huh? Where did these jungle-dwelling Mayans come from? Each one looks like a featherless turkey..."

Old militia Chiwaco, wearing leather armor and holding a long spear, stood beside Priest Tomate, observing the approaching Maya tribes. Soon, in the last glow of the sunset, he noticed the familiar family crest on the opponents' war clothes, and his brows immediately furrowed.

"Oh! Is this?"

"Hmm. Indeed!"

Priest Tomate nodded, gesturing towards the approaching Maya warriors, then pointing to the Mayan merchant Tikalo, who was steps away, remaining silent.

Tikalo was wearing a robe with the same family crest. At this moment, he sat slumped on the ground, his clothes torn, face in disarray, with a wound on his arm still seeping blood, and no one to bandage him. He pursed his lips, smiling slightly, sitting quietly, watching the approaching Maya warriors, looking both like a fallen sage and a destitute elder.

Over two hundred Maya warriors stopped, a few dozen steps away, not getting closer. Puapu, leading the main body of warriors, donned armor, and held their weapons, warily facing the "allies" from earlier.

Subsequently, a young Maya Divine Descendant with long snake-like hair and face tattoos, and a nose ring, strode out from the crowd. He approached Tikalo, examining Tikalo's smiling face in the fading evening light. After a few moments, the young Maya Divine Descendant's expression turned to excitement and joy. He revealed his divine teeth embedded with gemstones and shouted at Tikalo on the ground in ancient Mayapan.

"Uncle Tikalo! You have returned!"

"Ti'aj Kin, my nephew, the last sun of Mayapan, you have grown!"

Tikalo laughed, joyfully. In the Maya language, "Ah Kin" means the most revered sun. Sitting on the ground, he looked at his nephew's esteemed and mature divine face, and then at the tattered and outdated war clothes of the Mayapan warriors, and laughed as tears streamed down.

"It's been over ten years! ... I have finally returned here, seeing all of you!..."

"Hey! What are you two mumbling about?"

Huitu Puapu raised an eyebrow, watching the tearful reunion of the two, finally realizing something was amiss. Holding the head of Xiutur, he stepped closer, examining the excited Maya Divine Descendant, and then looked at the slumping Maya merchant.

"Hmm? You two look a bit alike? Except one is bald, the other tattooed. Could it be..."

Puapu scratched his head, pondering Tikalo for a moment, suddenly had an epiphany.

"Tikalo, I see, is this the seed you left in the Maya?!"

"...Puapu, you fool!"

Old militia Chiwaco, holding a long spear, walked up to the three of them. He had already learned the ins and outs of the battle from Priest Tomate. At this moment, he reversed the spear handle, wishing to strike Puapu twice, to vent his inner anger.

"Chief Divine grant me peace! Let me see the truth of the world, and find my way in the chaotic jungle!"

Priest Tomate closed his eyes, praying devoutly, calming the fire in his chest. Then, expressionless, he walked directly to Tikalo, helping him up with an extended hand.

"Tikalo, I have a few questions that I want you to answer! These answers will be witnessed by the Chief Divine and will determine your future fate."

"Chief Divine as witness! Respected Priest Tomate, I will speak everything without reservation and follow your arrangements."

Tikalo smiled sincerely, with an expression of complete honesty.

"Very well!"

Priest Tomate nodded heavily. He pointed at the Divine Descendant's severed head in Puapu's hand, which couldn't be closed in death, and then at the Maya warriors wearing large snake patterned war clothes. Finally, he looked at Maya merchant Tikalo, his expression extremely serious, coldly asking.

"Who is he? Who are they? ... And who are you?!"

Chapter 1084: Second Kingdom Expedition, Nighttime Negotiations, The Price of Fate

As dusk fell, the Samurai lit bonfires, tidying up the remnants of the battlefield. The leaders of the fleet stood before the small Temple Pyramid, each with a different expression, awaiting the response from the Mayan merchant Tikalo.

"With a tattooed forehead and pierced nose and ears, filed teeth, and a tongue stud... refusing to close his eyes in death, what a head filled with Divinity!"

Tikalo smiled as he reached out to receive the shockingly wide-eyed head of Prince Xi Wu, meticulously examining it, overcome with emotion. Then, holding the front of the head, he turned to Priest Tomate and replied with a smile.

"He was the first heir of the Xi Wu family, the most outstanding son of Clan Leader Xiupan, the valiant Prince Xiutur! Clan Leader Xiupan is old, and he was counting on this remarkable son to inherit his position. Thus, he was the next Leader of the Xi Wu family..."

"What! The first heir of the Xi Wu family? The most powerful Xi Wu family on the Peninsula? The foremost heir next to the Clan Leader?"

Hearing this, the old Militia's eyes sharpened as he looked at Tikalo.

"Are you sure?!"

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! It's indeed true!"

Tikalo nodded openly, returning the head to Huitu Puap. Beside him, Priest Tomate's face darkened as he fell into thought. In any case, this meant that the Kingdom and the southern Xi Wu family had thoroughly become arch-enemies.

"Puapu, you fool, starting a war at will!"

The old Militia's anger flared as he reversed his spear and struck Puapu's shoulder hard. Puapu cried out in pain, glaring back at the old Militia.

"Old man Chi, what are you doing! I fought bravely and took the enemy leader's head. How can that be wrong? Besides, get it right; they attacked us first!..."

"...what a stupid log! Cut and thrown into water, yet smug that it can float!"

Chi Waco gritted his teeth, ceasing further discussion with the blockhead. He turned his head, sternly gazing at the Mayan merchant, and asked,

"Tikalo, are these emerging Maya Tribes remnants of your Mayapan?"

"Captain Chiwaco, you truly have the wisdom of a tortoise."

Tikalo praised, smiling as he had done countless times before. Then, he reached out, grabbed his nephew Ti'aj Kin's arm, and solemnly introduced him to everyone.

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! He is the Divine Descendant of Divine Capital Tikal, the last Sun of Mayapan, the current leader of the Kokom Family, Ti'aj Kin!"

"Ah? The Divine Descendant of Divine Capital Tikal!"

Hearing this, Puapu was taken aback, his right hand instinctively reaching for the Bronze Axe at his waist.

"Another Serpent Divine Descendant!"

"...Honorable Leader Puapu, your Divine Eagle Curse has been lifted! There's no need for the Divine Blood of the Serpent Divine Descendant anymore."

Tikalo respectfully bowed his head, explaining, fearing that the Huitu Samurai might let their passion lead them to some unthinkable actions.

"Oh, right! Haha! My curse is lifted!"

Puapu released his right hand, glanced once more at the head he held in his left hand, feeling inexplicably joyous. Then, his expression suddenly shifted as he looked at Tikalo.

"Tikalo, how do you know about my curse?"

"Oh! You've inquired about the Serpent Divine Descendant and the curse's resolution multiple times. When I thought it over a bit, I figured it out."

Tikalo responded with a gentle smile, unconcerned. Puapu rubbed his head, recalling the old Prophet in Hidden Serpent City, and felt a surge of gratitude.

"Truly a Divine old Prophet! Showing me the right path and lifting my curse. I feel much lighter now, and can finally sleep well!"

"The last Sun of Mayapan, the current leader of the Kokom Family..."

Priest Tomate rubbed his chin, deliberating. After a moment, he looked at Tikalo and asked.

"Tikalo, what is your relationship with him?"

"Hmm... he is the Divine Descendant Clan Leader of the Kokom Family, and I am his uncle."

Tikalo replied with a smile, leaving everyone visibly surprised. The old Militia raised his eyebrows, unable to hold back his comment.

"Of course! Tikalo, you cunning fox, daring to scheme against the fleet?!"

"Honorable Captain Chiwaco, why would you say such a thing?"

Tikalo shook his head, answering sincerely.

"The Xi Wu family dispatching a Divine Descendant northward wasn't something I could determine! Besides, you've watched me all along the journey; you know best what I have or haven't done... I haven't done anything!"

"Ha! Then why is this Maya Tribe here? Why did they suddenly ambush the Xi Wu family?"

"Oh, this Maya Tribe was indeed brought by me."

Tikalo nodded frankly, confirming.

"The remnants of Mayapan settled in the jungle not far from here under the Kapul Family's protection. This is the Tribe I hail from, and naturally, I wish for the Kingdom Fleet to trade with them, giving them some advantages. Moreover, they are familiar with the situation of the Lowland Maya and know the latest dynamics of the Kapul Family, which greatly benefits the fleet's exploration!"

"Ha! Beneficial to the fleet's exploration, is it?..."

The old Militia shook his head. No matter the Mayan merchant's clever arguments, his instincts had already targeted Tikalo. Even if unaware of his methods, everything that had happened was surely a result of Tikalo's schemes. Fate looks upon everyone fairly; there can't be so many coincidences!

Thinking this, the old Militia gritted his teeth, harboring silent resolve.

"Once we're back on the ship, I won't give you another chance to meddle!"

"Tikalo, why did you suddenly blow the Bone Whistle, sending your Tribe to attack the Xi Wu family's formation?"

Chapter 1085: Second Kingdom Expedition, Nighttime Negotiations, The Price of Fate

Priest Tomate asked impassively, his voice deep. In his heart, he already had the answer, but he needed to hear Tikalo's explanation to understand more details.

"The remnants of Mayapan and the Xiu Family harbor an irreconcilable blood feud! When the two sides meet, it is destined to end in a battle to the death, until one side falls completely!..."

Tikalo, with a solemn expression, pondered for a moment before speaking the truth. On this point, the flaws he exhibited were too large to conceal. And at this moment, it was basically a case of the plan reaching its crucial point, and it was time to confess.

"Forty-eight years ago, the Xiu Family raided Mayapan, annihilating the Kokom Royal Family of the Capital City. However, there was still a branch outside, miraculously surviving. At that time, my grandfather, Ticanto, as a branch of the Royal Family, was with his eldest son and second son, negotiating Kingdom trade with the Maya in Copan in the southeast. They became the only surviving members of the Royal Family."

"My grandfather, with dozens of trusted aides, traveled day and night to return to the Mayapan Kingdom. However, in the territory of the Kapul Family, he received the terrifying news! The Xiu Family had slaughtered the Royal Family and massacred the Capital City, Mayapan. Tens of thousands of Xiu warriors were looting and killing in the surrounding areas, purging all nobility loyal to the Royal Family!"

"Grandfather immediately went to White Eagle City to seek help from the nearest Kingdom Legion, the Kapul Legion. However, the Kapul Legion was under the control of the Kapul Family... It took a full ten days before the Kapul Legion set out from White Eagle City! By then, virtually all the noble loyalists to the Royal Family in the Mayapan region had been slaughtered."

At this point, Tikalo clenched his teeth, a look of grief and anger on his face. He hated the nobility of the various cities for governing autonomously after the fall of the Capital City, focusing only on vying for the Kingdom's legacy, allowing the treacherous Xiu Family to grow. He didn't know what his grandfather had gone through, only the resentful words left by his grandfather before his death.

"The clans of the cities either watched coldly, hesitated, or acted slowly, except for the Canul Guardian Clan who dispatched troops immediately—all betrayed the Royal Family!... Years after the Kingdom fell, Grandfather gathered a hundred thousand refugees, in Tibolon City northeast of Mayapan, to restore the country and fight bitterly with the Xiu Family. He sought support from all the powerful city-states in every possible way, even marrying his eldest son to a princess of the Kapul Family!"

"However, ten years later, Grandfather died in battle in the Mayapan region, and the Mayapan Kingdom ceased to exist. The city clans everywhere had seized land as their own kingdoms. Twenty years later, the Xiu Family had taken control of everything in the region, erasing all influence of the Kokom Family. After that, the Xiu Family launched annual attacks, making it difficult even to defend Tibolon City... Tens of thousands of refugees could only migrate once again to the northeastern jungle, seeking protection from the Kapoor Clan. We couldn't even mention the Mayapan Kingdom anymore, as the Kapul Family did not acknowledge the continuation of the Kingdom..."

Tikalo closed his eyes and sighed long and deeply. The glorious kingdom had long since collapsed and perished, and its final continuation had dispersed like smoke. At this moment, on the Lowland Maya, there only remained the struggling Kokom Family, with no longer the "Maya Royal Family" as the common lord of the states.

"In the northeastern jungle, life was extremely difficult, and the fighting continued. The eldest son of my grandfather, the father of Ti'aj Kin, also died on the battlefield fighting the Xiu Family. Ti'aj Kin, with the bloodline of the Kapul Family, could gain partial support from the Kapul city-states, making him the most suitable leader as the Divine Descendant!"

"As for me, from the moment I was born, I was chosen as a merchant and envoy to travel outside. The family did not cultivate me with the face of divinity, allowing me to travel discreetly without being discovered by the Xiu Family... More than ten years ago, I went to the Western Highland, trading in the

powerful Mexica Alliance, selling Divine Smoke, acquiring goods with lucrative profits. And nine years ago, for the first time, I met the young prince..."

Listening to Tikalo's confession of his origins, Priest Tomate lowered his eyes, contemplating silently. The old militia man also bowed his head, gently sighing. Huitu Puapu stared wide-eyed at Tikalo, exclaiming in surprise.

"Tikalo! You... you are also a Serpent Divine Descendant?!"

No one answered, silence reigned. After a moment, Priest Tomate gripped the amulet around his neck, silently praying. Then, his eyes stern, he continued to question mercilessly.

"Tikalo! His Highness once promised you that in the future, he would help you become the lord of the City-State of Tutulxiu! Why are you still scheming to arrange a slaughter for the exploring Kingdom Fleet?"

"The promise made by the young prince?... Haha! How can the promise of a king be taken seriously?"

Upon hearing this, Tikalo laughed silently, shaking his head.

"If the fleet establishes contact with the Xiu Family, they will understand what a flexible, forbearing, and well-informed family they are! Chief Xiupan has led the Xiu Family for more than a decade, cunning and devious, with the most supple stance. If he learns about the current state of the Alliance and Kingdom, he will certainly take the initiative to send envoys to connect with the Alliance and Kingdom!"

"The Xiu Family's Chief Xiupan is not like those old fossils in the Canul Council of Elders! He will not only trade with the Mexica Alliance to acquire weapons and armor but also take the initiative to marry into the Alliance. And if the Warriors of the Kingdom truly cross the sea from the East of the Sea, unstoppable, he might be the first to step forward, to ally with the Kingdom, to submit subserviently to the Alliance!"

Chapter 1086: Second Kingdom Expedition, Nighttime Negotiations, The Price of Fate

"Between the Xiu Family and the Kokom Family, only one will survive! When the time comes, who will the true king choose, between Tutulxiu, which controls four to five hundred thousand people, and the

remnants of Mayapan, which are only forty to fifty thousand? How can I entrust the fate of my family to the king's choice?"

Upon hearing such straightforward sentiments, Priest Tomate and the old militia, Chiwaco, exchanged glances and fell silent again.

In fact, when the Spaniards sailed across the sea and landed on the Yucatan Peninsula, the Xiu Family of Tutulxiu quickly realized the power of the Spaniards and became the first Maya clan to ally with them! Just eight years after forming the alliance with the Spaniards, the first Spanish Catholic mission was established in the Xiu Family's capital, Mani City.

The humility and endurance of the Xiu Family allowed them to remain a significant power in Tutulxiu until the 19th century. Even after Mexico's independence, they became council members in Yucatan State, continuing their legacy. As for the remnants of the Kokom Family, they were completely annihilated by the allied forces of the Xiu Family and the Spaniards after the colonizers arrived.

Of course, Tikalo was unaware of the Xiu Family's future. He was merely determined to use his meticulous plans to create an irreconcilable blood feud between the powerful kingdom and the Xiu Family! Now, he has succeeded. The Kokom Family finally has a real turnaround!

"We've established a deadly feud with the Xiu Family, and it can't be resolved. We can't stay here any longer; we need to leave quickly!"

After a moment, the old militia raised his head, glanced at the prince's head in Puap's hand, and confirmed sternly.

"These Maya warriors are quick to escape! By now, they might have reached that carved stone city down south. Their prince is left here; even if it's just to retrieve the body, they will definitely gather their forces and attack here again!"

"That's right! The Tail Feather Clan is a vassal of the Xiu Family. The death of the lord's heir here is a highly significant matter, and they will definitely be eager to send troops! A clan of tens of thousands of people can easily muster a few thousand..."

Priest Tomate nodded, his expression grave.

"Don't linger any longer! Take all the wounded; we must get on the boat as soon as possible!"

"...Respected Captain Chiwaco, respected Priest Tomate!"

Hearing their words, Tikalo paused. Anxious, he reached out and grabbed Priest Tomate's sleeve.

"The Kokom Family is the fleet's most reliable ally! You can trust us because the kingdom is our only hope!"

"I believe in your fighting spirit, but I don't trust your strength. We can ally with you, but the so-called restoration you long for must be decided by the prince!... Say no more, don't argue. The Chief Divine gives me clear eyes; you can't deceive me!"

Priest Tomate squinted, sizing up the Mayapan warriors around, then glanced at their tattered war clothes, shaking his head. He finally turned to Puap, speaking to the Huitu warrior for the first time after the battle.

"Huitu, gather all the warriors; stop clearing the battlefield. Before midnight tonight, we must leave!"

"Huh? Not celebrating the victory here?... All right, I'll gather the warriors now."

"By the way, leave the head you're holding!"

"Oh? Okay!"

Huitu Puapu scratched his head, left the head of Prince Xiutur, and nodded, then departed. Until now, he hadn't noticed Priest Tomate's dissatisfaction, still proud of the brave battle.

"Respected Kokom leader, Ti'aj Kin!"

Priest Tomate turned around, greeting the young leader of the Kokom Family in a deep voice. Then, without any formalities, he got straight to the point.

"The kingdom has made a formidable enemy among the Lowland Maya because of you. We have a common enemy, which is the basis of being allies. However, our strengths are not the same, and you must pay the necessary price for your uncle's unauthorized actions! This is the foundation of everything..."

Priest Tomate, steadfast in spirit, looked at the young leader Ti'aj Kin with bright eyes. He raised the scripture in his hand, speaking with extreme seriousness in a deep voice.

"The Chief Divine witnesses all and blesses the Maya clans! I ask you, are you willing to completely abandon the old faith, devoutly worship the Supreme Main God, and become the first Maya chieftain to convert to the Lord?"

Chapter 1087: The Second Exploration of the Kingdom, The Ceremony of Night and Fire, and the First Mayan Priest

The moon rises in the east, and the bonfire shines. Priest Tomate holds the scripture high, gazing at the clan leader of the Kokom Family, the young Serpent Divine Descendant Ti'aj Kin. The devoted priest's heart is as hard as stone, viewing faith as the foundation of everything. If the opposing Maya chieftain refuses, he will lose the hard-earned opportunity.

"Ah! Abandon the Heavenly Serpent Divine and completely convert to the Chief Divine?"

Upon hearing his uncle Tikalo's translation, Ti'aj Kin's forehead sweats. Such a condition is an unacceptable price for any Maya Divine Descendant. Generations of ancestors have worshiped the Heavenly Serpent Divine, the family has prided itself on being the most revered Serpent Divine Descendant, passed down for a thousand years... Is he to convert to the Mexica Chief Divine of the Highlands today?

"I?... How could this be?... "

"Promise him! Ti'aj Kin, my nephew, the last sun of Mayapan!"

Mayan merchant Tikalo gazes resolutely at his young nephew. He has wandered among various tribes for decades, already cultivating a flexible faith bottom line. At this moment, he solemnly advises in the ancient Mayapan language.

"Think of the hundred thousand undead of Mayapan! Think of your father, grandfather, and great-grandfather! The blood feud of the Kokom Family is like mountains and oceans... This is the family's last chance! Seize it, promise him!"

"The father who died in battle, the grandfather who died in battle, the great-grandfather who died in battle... The blood debt of the Xiu Family, the revenge of Kokom!"

The young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin grits his teeth, flames ignite in his eyes. For revenge, he is willing to pay any price, even if it means completely converting to a new god. He does not hesitate, slowly kneeling under Priest Tomate's , and cries out softly.

"I am willing! I am willing to worship the Supreme Main God! No matter what kind of divine spirit He is, or what price He requires of me, as long as He grants me strength!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate raises his eyebrow. He deeply looks at the young divine descendant and speaks meaningfully.

"My child, the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli is the Supreme God of the Divine Realm. His power is beyond your imagination. You need only to sincerely believe in Him, and strength will descend upon your soul... You must swear by the Ancestor Spirit never to betray, sincerely one!"

Boundless darkness envelops the jungle, star-like flames flicker at the feet. The ancient, broken Chaos Temple stands ahead, while hundreds of Xiu Family samurai corpses lie behind. Light and darkness, desolation and death, together depict the mystery of the night, also narrating the ancient god.

"...I swear by the Ancestor Spirit!"

Under the scripture, the young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin kneels, his forehead sweating again. He bites his lip hard, even drawing blood. Swearing by the Ancestor Spirit, if violated...

"I will sincerely believe in the Chief Divine, Huitzilopochtli! He is the Supreme God of the Divine Realm, ruling over my flesh, blood, and soul! I will never betray throughout my life, if violated... if violated..."

Priest Tomate lowers his eyes, his lips lightly moving, reciting the guidance.

"If violated... then the Kokom Family bloodline shall be severed, the Ancestor Spirit will eternally fall into the Abyss, never to find peace."

"Ah!..."

"Speak."

"...I will never betray the Chief Divine throughout my life, if violated... then the Kokom Family bloodline shall be severed, the Ancestor Spirit will eternally fall into the Abyss, never to find peace!"

The young divine descendant, lost and forlorn, takes the most vicious oath.

"Very good!"

Priest Tomate finally nods, a smile appearing on his lips.

"Bow your head, I will cut off your hair and throw it into the fire. Raise your hand, I will cut your palm, letting the blood drip into the fire. From this day forward, your soul and blood will go to the Divine Kingdom, controlled by the Chief Divine! And your body will remain in the human world, spreading the glory of the Chief Divine among your tribes!..."

"...Yes. I will spread the glory of the Chief Divine among the tribes..."

Soon, curling green smoke rises on the low bonfire, carrying a burnt smell. Priest Tomate meticulously conducts the strictest, most formal faith ritual. Such a harsh ritual actually exceeds the standard for

ordinary conversion, reaching the requirement for priest apprentices at entry. Indeed, this conversion ritual is also the initiation ceremony for the Chief God Priest.

"Praise the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! He stands supreme, ruling all, omnipotent!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! He stands supreme, ruling all, omnipotent!..."

The two recite the prayers one after another, one standing and one kneeling. The air fills with the scent of burning blood, the surrounding crowd remains silent. The mysterious atmosphere slowly disperses in the firelight under the night.

"..."

Old militia Chiwaco watches silently, not urging. He glanced at the Mayan merchant Tikalo, whose face appears calm, allowing Priest Tomate to act.

"Very good!"

After the ceremony, Priest Tomate looks at the inexplicably dazed young divine descendant, pondering. He always feels something is missing, wanting to do something more. What can he do? How can he deeply engrave the faith of the Chief Divine into the young priest's heart like an emblem?

"Engrave it?... "

Thinking this, Priest Tomate's expression changes. He recalls the most diligent sailor on the flagship, whose forehead is marked with a bright red Sun Hummingbird.

"Ahem! The final step. As the most important Maya Divine Descendant, I will grant you the most special ceremony! Close your eyes, raise your head, feel the glory and majesty of the Chief Divine... I will engrave His emblem on your forehead!"

The young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin hesitates, obediently closes his eyes and raises his head. Priest Tomate's lips curl as he draws the obsidian dagger from his waist, steps forward, and his wrist comes down steadily!

"...!"

Mayan merchant Tikalo suddenly widens his eyes, opens his mouth to speak. But after a few breaths, he says nothing. Old militia Chiwaco also remembers something, his eye corner twitches.

"Hiss!..."

Cold pain spreads from the forehead, seemingly etched into the bone. The young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin grits his teeth, thinking of the burning revenge, somehow endures it.

After a while, Priest Tomate finally completes the last step. He gazes at the bright red Sun Hummingbird flying on the young divine descendant's forehead and smiles satisfied.

"Ti'aj Kin, my child, do you feel the Chief Divine's gaze?"

"I feel it, esteemed Navajo Priest."

"Oh? What is His gaze like?"

"It is majestic, like fire. Blinding, painful, yet powerful!"

The young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin answers truthfully with closed eyes. Hearing his sincere reply, Priest Tomate smiles warmly.

"Very good! Ti'aj Kin, from today on, you are the divine descendant blessed by the Chief Divine! Similarly, you will also become the Chief Divine's priest, serving Him lifelong!... Praise the Chief Divine! He blesses us, granting us invincible power!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! He blesses us, granting us invincible power!"

Low chanting echoes between the temple and jungle, then fades into the night. The first Maya chieftain to convert to the Chief Divine, the first Maya priest to worship the Chief Divine, is born. Tikalo looks at the two, silently lowers his gaze. He smells the scent of fate's favor, yet it is unrelated to him.

"Alright! Tikalo, we can finally talk again. As new allies, discuss the price of your error. This will affect your destiny."

Priest Tomate turns around, switching from devout Chief God Priest to a crucial fleet leader. He observes the silent Mayan merchant Tikalo with a half-smile, speaking in the alliance's Navajo language. For some reason, the sacrificial dagger in Priest Tomate's hand remains drawn, shining in dark red light under the flame.

"Tikalo, you should know His Highness's regard for this East exploration. Yet you plotted all this. Therefore, are you prepared to offer enough compensation to calm His Highness's wrath? Or are you ready to sacrifice yourself, offering your heart to the divine spirit..."

Chapter 1088: The Second Kingdom Expedition—Kuba? Cuba!

The night was deep, and the jungle was eerie. The exploration team treated the wounded and began to board the ships. The Mayapan people were still scouring the battlefield, collecting spoils of war from the corpses. The leaders of both sides gathered in front of a bonfire, staring at each other, waiting silently.

"The cost of compensation..."

The Mayan merchant Tikalo lowered his gaze, lost in thought and silent. He did have some aces up his sleeve to calm the kingdom's wrath. However, in the difficult situation of the remnants of the Mayapan, such aces were already scarce. Once given away, the value of the Mayapan remnants to the kingdom...

"Forget it! I really have no choice."

Tikalo's gaze swept past the Obsidian Dagger stained with blood in Priest Tomate's hand. This dagger had cut lobsters, etched divine runes, and naturally offered sacrifices. Faced with such a threat, he sighed lightly and looked at the young Divine Descendant Ti'aj Kin.

"Ti'aj Kin, have the people I instructed been brought?"

"Huh?"

The young Divine Descendant shook his head hard, finally awakening from the priest's ritual. After thinking for a moment, he understood who his uncle was referring to.

"Oh. They have been brought."

"Then bring them here!"

"Okay!"

Ti'aj Kin turned his head and gave some orders to the noble warriors behind him. Soon, a tall, slightly dark-skinned, middle-aged warrior with tattoos on his face appeared before everyone, holding an old tablet.

"Heavenly Serpent Divine bless! Praise you, Sun of Mayapan, exalted Chieftain Kekum!"

The tall middle-aged warrior placed down the tablet, knelt on the ground, and bowed to Ti'aj Kin. He raised his hands high, then laid them flat on the ground, showing heartfelt submission.

"Chief Divine bless! Kuba, the loyal warrior of Mayapan. Your ancestors have been loyal to the royal family for generations, and you have also been loyal to me for many years."

Ti'aj Kin maintained a calm expression, exhibiting the majesty of a Divine Descendant. He watched the prostrate Kuba, paused, then continued.

"And now, you must serve a more exalted Chief Divine, pledge your allegiance to the Navajo Priest from the Western Highlands. You are to follow him eastward, returning to the land of your ancestors, to spread the majesty and light of the divine to your still-ignorant people!"

"...Yes! As you wish, Sun of Mayapan!"

Upon hearing the word "Sun," Kuba seemed somewhat confused but respectfully bowed. Then, he followed the Sun's command and turned to bow to Priest Tomate.

"Praise you! Exalted Highland Priest!"

"Hmm?"

Priest Tomate looked at the bowing Kuba, then at the composed Mayan merchant Tikalo. He raised his eyebrows, pointed a finger, and asked in a deep voice.

"Tikalo, is this the price of your compensation?"

"Indeed! Priest Tomate, he is one of the compensations, and the most important one... He will certainly satisfy the kingdom and His Highness!"

The Mayan merchant nodded affirmatively. Then, he smiled mysteriously.

"Do you know where he comes from?"

"Hmm?..."

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate's eyes showed a reaction. He looked at the old militiaman Chiwaco, who also met his gaze. The same guess surfaced in both their minds as they looked eastward.

"Could it be?"

"That's right! His name is Kuba, and he is from Cuba (cubao)! The meaning of 'Cuba' is the vast and fertile land. And that land is the Eastern Snake Island that His Highness yearns for!"

Tikalo spoke confidently, word by word. These plain words fell into Priest Tomate's ears like Thunderbolt.

"What! He is the Taino person His Highness spoke of?"

"You could say so. But to be more precise..."

Tikalo paused, forgetting that complex name for a moment. He then looked at the compliant Kuba and asked.

"Kuba, where do your ancestors come from? What is their tribe?"

"Praise you! Respected Divine Descendant. My ancestors come from the far west of Cuba. They are the Guanahatabey people. But to the east of the tribe, on the flat plains, are the Taino. However, their self-designation is Guanahani. Both Guanahatabey and Guanahani reside on the vast Cuba, both belonging to the fertile land of Cuba."

"Guanahatabey? Guanahani? Cubans?"

Priest Tomate's eyes widened, instantly filled with excitement. The Eastern Snake Island that His Highness longed for appeared before his eyes just like that! He recalled His Highness's earnest exhortations before departure, as if a surge of hot blood was coursing through his chest. After a while, he calmed down and asked solemnly.

"Kuba, are you from Cuba Snake Island?"

"No. Exalted Highland Chieftain, I grew up among the Lowland Maya. But I have returned to Cuba several times with merchant ships, visiting the West Mountain tribes where my ancestors came from."

"Ah? The West Mountain tribes of Cuba?"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate stroked his chin and asked.

"Where is the West Mountain?"

"Uh... the West Mountain is the West Mountain, the mountain to the west."

Kuba raised his head and gave Priest Tomate a curious look. Then he thought for a moment, and with Tikalo's hint, answered.

"Cuba is a long, flat fertile land. It indeed resembles a snake, with its head facing east and its tail facing west. There are great mountains at both ends, while the middle is quite flat. The snake's head is the East Mountain, and the snake's tail is the West Mountain."

"Ah, I see!"

Priest Tomate nodded, pondered for a while, and asked again.

"Kuba, can you speak Taíno Language?"

"Highland Chieftain, I can speak Mayan, Guanahatabey, and Taíno Language."

"Hm? Guanahatabey?"

"Oh, it's the language of my ancestral tribe. The tribes on Cuba's western side speak Guanahatabey, while in the middle and eastern parts, they speak Guanahani, which is Taíno Language. The two languages are different."

"Ah, I see!"

Priest Tomate nodded repeatedly, a smile once again appearing on his face. He looked at Kuba who was prostrated, his eyes shining as if he were gazing at an unrivaled beauty. The devout Priest pondered for a moment, then couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked.

"Kuba, would you like to convert to the Chief Divine?"

"Huh? Convert to the Chief Divine?..."

Kuba looked up, bewildered. Then, seeing Priest Tomate's glowing gaze, he shivered all over.

"I..."

"Ahem! Honorable Priest Tomate..."

Tikalo chuckled, interrupting at the right moment. He picked up the old map board on the ground, took a reminiscent glance, and then respectfully handed it to Priest Tomate.

"Look at this. Another item that may satisfy you."

"What is this?!"

"This is the sea chart to Cuba. It marks the sea route to Cuba and the names and locations of thirty tribes on Cuba!"

Upon mentioning this, Tikalo pressed his lips together, his eyes somewhat nostalgic, his tone far-reaching.

"When the Mayapan Kingdom was at its peak, it had frequent trade exchanges with the tribes on Cuba Island, especially those on the western side. The kingdom's fleets traveled back and forth between the east and west, and many tribes on the island recognized the Royal Family's emblem and traded goods

with the kingdom. Some chieftains even submitted to the Royal Family, sending their young kin. Kuba's ancestors were among them..."

"Although trading with Cuba means crossing the seas and risking stormy waves, the profits are extremely high! The kingdom could acquire tobacco, cotton, pineapples, cassava, fish, and feathers produced on the island at very low prices... This sea chart of Mayapan is the ultimate treasure that all Mayan merchants dream of having!"

"The sea chart to Cuba... the ultimate treasure..."

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate muttered repeatedly, a glow of joy on his face. He eagerly lowered his head to look at the map board in his hands.

On the far left end of the board is a port of departure, Ekab. Then, several squiggly lines lead from the north and south to the east, until a narrow piece of land. Maya numbers are marked on these lines, which, according to Tikalo's translation, range from six hundred to eight hundred li.

"From Ekab towards the east, travel six hundred to eight hundred li, that's Cuba!"

Upon seeing this, Priest Tomate was invigorated. He eagerly continued to look down. The length of 'Cuba' was exceedingly narrow, extending over two thousand li to the southeast. Along the coast were various Maya characters, likely markings for different tribes.

"Tikalo, where is the West Mountain Tribe where Kuba originates?"

"Here! Arriving at the westernmost end of Cuba, head east along the Southern Coast; the first large tribe at the mountain's base is the West Mountain Tribe!"

Priest Tomate extended his hand, pressing on the location of the West Mountain Tribe, staying there intently for a while. His gaze then traveled eastward until reaching the end of Cuba, noticing a distinctly marked spot at the East Mountain.

"Huh? What is this marked spot?"

"Oh! Decades ago, the fleet of the Mayapan Kingdom collected some sparkling black gemstones here that attract and repel each other."

Tikalo's expression was somber as he reminisced about a long-lost tale. Life is unpredictable... His face showed a smile with a hint of regret.

"I once chose two black gemstones as gifts for His Highness. Upon seeing them, His Highness was quite excited. He asked where they came from, but I didn't mention the exact location; I simply said they were from the Eastern Snake Island..."

"But now, the kingdom has called the place where these gemstones are found an iron mine! The kingdom recognizes the iron mine, where even a small piece was considered an immense treasure by His Highness. But at this marked spot, the iron ore... it stands exposed, forming a mountain!"

"Ah? The hard black iron formed from the Feathered Serpent Divine's fangs after its death? A mountain formed from iron ore?!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate suddenly gripped his scripture tightly, shouting in amazement. His face showed an intense fervor, his eyes brightening sharply, causing even Tikalo to slightly lower his head.

"Yes! Here, right here! His Highness once had a Divine Revelation, prophesying to build a city here! The fleet must arrive here, the Kingdom's Warriors will also arrive... smelting iron ore, building a fortress, guarding against white-skinned demons, and suppressing the Feathered Serpent Divine's corpse!"

Chapter 1089: Second Kingdom Expedition, Kekum's Price, Sweeping Star River

The long night stretches endlessly, unknowingly deep. The jungle is serene, with the faint calls of a flock of birds. The campfire slowly dims, people's expressions fluctuate, their thoughts ebbing and flowing, hearts tethered to the Eastern Sea.

Tikalo's eyes lowered, he bowed respectfully, and asked with a smile.

"Priest Tomate, the translator from Cuba, the sea chart to Cuba, and the location of the iron ore... are these three items satisfactory to you?"

At these words, Priest Tomate's eyes flickered, giving Tikalo a deep, thoughtful look.

"Tikalo, you must know how much His Highness values these three things. Why didn't you personally inform His Highness when you were in Water Valley City? His Highness would have certainly rewarded you generously. What you desire, you can ask from His Highness!"

Upon hearing this, Tikalo's eyes lifted slightly, he smiled and said nothing. Priest Tomate revered His Highness as a Divine Revelation Prophet, the supreme king. But in his heart, that was once a naive youngster, and thus he could not rely on him. Now that His Highness has become a cold ruler, he trusts him even less.

"The chips in my hand, I have only once!... Blood and deep vengeance, such a cunning opponent. How can I depend on the king's will, and hope for the rewards of those in power?"

Tikalo's thoughts churned silently. Priest Tomate, observing for a moment, seemed to also understand. He shook his head subtly, solemn in expression, and spoke again.

"Tikalo. The Mayapan Kingdom ruled the lowlands for over two hundred years, even if only in name as the Maya king, even if it has been defunct for many years... the foundation of that kingdom must still have remnants. You must have more in your hand that you can offer!"

"Hmm..."

Tikalo slightly lowered his head, avoiding the piercing gaze of Priest Tomate. But the priest did not relent, reaching out to grasp his arm.

"Hiss!"

Tikalo winced in pain, his eyelid twitching and the corner of his mouth cringing.

"Priest Tomate, you!..."

"Hand it over!"

Priest Tomate's gaze was stern, glaring into the eyes of the Mayan merchant, demanding sharply.

"Hand it over! As witnessed by the Chief Divine! What you offer to the divine will surely be returned in double! What you offer to the kingdom will surely return in double to the remnants of Mayapan!... At such a time, why do you hesitate? The gamble has already begun! If you dare not stake everything, how do you intend to sway the gigantic Xiu family?"

"I... this... Priest Tomate..."

Facing the pressing Priest Tomate, cold sweat broke on Tikalo's forehead. Now, it was his turn to feel the priest's fierce command, the majesty of the Chief Divine.

"You can only depend on the kingdom! Not through such laughable calculations but by investing wholeheartedly, serving the kingdom and His Highness! You do not know His Highness's ambition, you do not understand the greatness of the Divine Revelation! But you certainly know the strength and military might of the kingdom!"

"Within several years, Marshal Bertade of the Holy Eagle will lead thousands of elite warriors across the sea! And the Head Eagle Warrior is not only brave and skilled in battle, but also perceptive and wise. By then, even the mighty Xiu family will be utterly unable to resist the kingdom!..."

At this point, Priest Tomate's eyes sharpened, piercing directly into Tikalo's core.

"The kingdom is strong, it doesn't need the remnants of Mayapan to conquer the Xiu family! Tikalo, if you do not commit enough stakes now, by then, no matter who the land of Mayapan is given to, it will not concern you! If you want to reclaim the ancestral land, this price is insufficient, far from sufficient!"

"...The ancestral land, Mayapan... stakes..."

Tikalo closed his eyes, but Priest Tomate's words continued to echo in his heart. After a while, he let out a long sigh.

"Ah! Priest Tomate, you are indeed as sharp as an obsidian dagger, penetrating to the heart."

Tikalo wore a bitter smile. He opened his eyes, gazing into the priest's eyes, and sighed with emotion. After a moment, the Mayan merchant gathered himself, responding in a solemn tone.

"We will wager everything! Priest Tomate, this time when heading to Cuba, the fleet can carry the flag and war clothes of Mayapan, borrowing the kingdom's past reputation. Although fifty years have passed, there must still be people among the local tribes who remember the kingdom of old, especially among the tribes to the west. And the West Mountain Tribe, which once submitted to Mayapan, will also facilitate the kingdom's foothold in Cuba!"

"Oh? Borrow the prestige of the Mayapan Kingdom? Facilitate the initial trust and establishment?"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate's expression shifted. He glanced at the distinctive "big" family crest on Tikalo and Ti'aj Kin, nodding slowly.

"Very good! And what else?"

"..."

Tikalo lowered his gaze, contemplated for a bit, and responded again.

"The Mayapan Kingdom once organized fleets for long voyages. Besides heading east to Cuba, we also explored south along the coast. Starting from the Highland Maya, near Copán, further south stretches the winding southern coast..."

"First are the Ch'orti' people, famed for jade and pepper-like crops (Ch'orti', present-day Honduras), followed by the Nic-anahuac people known for spices (nic-anahuac, the region of Nicaragua), then the Cueva people producing pottery in the jungle (Cueva, the region of Panama)... Finally, there are the Chibcha people, holding gold (Chibcha, northern Colombia)."

Pausing slightly after this, Tikalo continued. This route was from a century ago, and among the remnants of Mayapan, only some records and sea charts remain, long devoid of translators and sailors familiar with the routes. However, in front of Priest Tomate, he still presented himself as confident and assured.

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"Honorable Priest Tomate, I understand His Highness's ambitions! He will undoubtedly care greatly about the intelligence on this route. Once our fleet returns to the kingdom, I will bring the sea charts inherited by the Kekum Royal Family and personally explain them to His Highness!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate pondered in silence. The Cuban sea chart in his hand was highly abstract, and the recorded writings were in the Mayan script of the Kokom Family. Without someone knowledgeable of the heritage to explain, it would be as blank as a whiteboard. The sea chart going south is likely the same.

"Very good! Tikalo, you have proven your worth and changed your destiny... Anything else?"

"..."

Tikalo remained silent again. This time, he truly felt like a gambler, betting everything and leaving his fate to the kingdom.

"Yes! We have a few old shipwrights from the kingdom era who are familiar with sail-making and hull reinforcement. The kingdom's longships use almost the best materials, but still have many shortcomings in the hulls. Sea ships, after all, are different from inland river boats; they must withstand wind and waves. And the shape and angle of the sails should also affect the ship's speed... I don't understand the specifics, but the Mayan merchant ships are much cheaper than the kingdom's ships and even faster."

As he mentioned this, Tikalo's eyes flickered. He had arranged for the Mayan merchant ships to follow the kingdom fleet closely and relied on local acquaintances to send messages to the rear fleet along the way...

"Good! Very good!"

Priest Tomate was very pleased. He glared with reddened eyes, leaning his body forward like a greedy giant tomato, pressing down on the pitiful bald caterpillar, squeezing everything out.

"What else? Bring it out!"

"...All the Mayan tribes master the art of beekeeping and produce honey. However, the bees in each tribe are of varying quality, resulting in honey of different qualities... I have heard that His Highness loves honey..."

Tikalo was drenched in sweat, barely managing a smile as he looked at the Tomato Priest, who was almost pressing against him.

"The Kokom Royal Family has the best breed of bees, along with unique beekeeping techniques. The tribe can offer the best bee breeds and bee slaves to His Highness! You know, the Kapul Family has asked for them several times, but we have never given them..."

"Oh? Beekeeping techniques, the best bee breeds, and bee slaves!"

Upon hearing this, Priest Tomate stroked his chin, deep in thought.

The Mayan beekeeping techniques have always been controlled by the Divine Descendant nobility of each tribe, never shared externally. They have slaves who serve generations, passed down to breed bees. These slaves have no personal freedom and are sacrificed when they grow old and can no longer work. If these techniques were brought back to the kingdom, ensuring stable production of fresh, high-quality honey... Perhaps this could win His Highness's favor.

"Not bad! And..."

"No more! No more!"

Mayan merchant Tikalo shook his head vigorously, forcefully pushing Priest Tomate away. He took a deep breath, sweating profusely, immediately regretting it in his heart.

"No! How could I hand over the last foundation of the Kokom Family to the kingdom all at once..."

"No! You must have more!"

Priest Tomate narrowed his eyes, coercively commanding.

"The Kokom Family must bear an indispensable cost to ensure the kingdom's trust!"

"Ah? What?"

"Hand over the direct descendants of the Divine Lineage to the Kingdom of the Lake to receive the kingdom's nurturing!"

Priest Tomate's lips curled up as he pointed at the young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin.

"Not yours, but his!"

"Ah! Ah, this..."

Tikalo was deeply anxious, not knowing how to argue. He knew this was asking for hostages, but there were only a dozen or so members left in the Kokom Family. As for the direct divine descendants, there were even fewer...

"...Well...The Little Prince is still very young, and the Little Princess is only two or three years old... Can we wait a few more years..."

"Uncle, what else does Priest Tomate want?"

Seeing this, the young divine descendant Ti'aj Kin couldn't hold back anymore and asked aloud.

"He wants..."

Tikalo's face was full of bitterness as he replied in a low voice.

"He wants the future of the Kokom Family...the direct descendants of the Serpent Divine..."

"..."

The young divine descendant lowered his head, biting his lip until it bled, tasting the metallic tang of blood. He smelled his blood, thought of the blood of his ancestors, considered the vengeance of today, and many other thoughts...

Under everyone's silent gaze, Ti'aj Kin reached out and grasped the sun talisman Priest Tomate had placed around his neck. He then closed his eyes, feeling the majesty of the Chief Divine on his forehead. Moments later, he finally looked up and spoke resolutely.

"Alright! I will give! ...When the kingdom's fleet returns, I will send both my eldest son and young daughter to the kingdom!"

The night grew deeper, the Milky Way shimmering overhead. The sea breeze blew through the jungle, carrying the mournful cries of the leaves. As the sea breeze swept across Tikalo, it brought both a chill and a hint of warmth. He felt dazed as he boarded the longship, looking at Ti'aj Kin standing under the ship, seeing only the resolute and mature face of his nephew.

"I am old... but he... has grown up... the last sun of Mayapan..."

"Quick! Quick! Put on the Nava Kingdom's long spears we have, wear the captured Xi Wu Wooden Armor, we need to leave quickly!..."

Ti'aj Kin had no time for sentiment. His eyes shone with ambition, and his face was full of high spirits. He urged repeatedly, commanding over three hundred tribe warriors to carry the six hundred copper spears, one hundred bronze axes, and twenty sets of leather armor supported by Priest Tomate.

"This battle was won with great spoils! Not only did we kill the prince of the Xiu Family, but also over three hundred of the most elite Xi Wu samurai. More importantly, the tribe gained the support of the western Nava Kingdom! Upon returning to the tribe, my authority and reputation will..."