

Civilization 1091

Chapter 1091: Second Kingdom Expedition, Kekum's Price, Sweeping Star River (Part 3)

Thinking of this, the young Divine Descendant felt invigorated. After a brief thought, he issued another command.

"Quickly! Bring the head of Prince Xi Wu of Xiutur! We don't need the Navarre people, just bring it back to the tribes to boost everyone's morale! After so many years, the tribes desperately need some good news!..."

"Heavenly Serpent Divine protect us! At your command, honorable Sun!"

"No, it's the Chief Divine's protection!"

Ti'aj Kin sternly corrected. The Heavenly Serpent Divine cannot bring power, so they worship a stronger Chief Divine. Only with enough power can they seek revenge, and reclaim the land of their ancestors, no matter the cost!

"Very well! Chief Divine's blessing!"

Priest Tomate nodded satisfyingly. Ti'aj Kin's words were repeated in his accent, using the Navajo language. He pondered for a moment, then asked Puap to bring a set of copper armor and a scripture to give to Ti'aj Kin. This was the first Mayan Chieftain and Priest who converted to the Chief Divine, a precious ember, not to be easily lost.

"Ti'aj Kin! Wear this! It's the Chief Divine's blessing, it will protect you, standing firm on the battlefield!"

Ti'aj Kin accepted the copper armor with doubt, touched it with his hand, then stabbed it with a dagger, and his face quickly showed ecstasy. He bowed his head, sincerely praying to Priest Tomate and the powerful Chief Divine.

"Praise the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! He is supreme, ruling over all things, omnipotent!"

"Good! Very good!"

Priest Tomate reached out, gently rubbed Ti'aj Kin's divine head, and spoke the final blessing.

"The Chief Divine will bless you, pious one! Under the Chief Divine's radiance, under your leadership, the Kokom Family will rise again, in the name of the Divine!"

The longship raised its sails, the fleet was ready, and was about to set sail again under the moonlight. Mayan merchant Tikalo looked toward the shore, watching his nephew Ti'aj Kin gradually go far, his heart suddenly twisted. He came to the edge of the ship and shouted toward the shore.

"Akin! Xiutur is dead, next, Xiupan will go mad! Remember, lead the tribe to migrate again, migrating to the heartland of the Kapoor Clan! Do not confront the Xiu Family directly!... Do you hear me?"

Tikalo's shout echoed by the sea, falling into the ears of the Mayapan warriors. Everyone looked up together, watching the solitary Divine Descendant leave on the Navarre people's large ship, as if a sacrifice offered to the Divine. Ti'aj Kin stared blankly, nodded dazedly, his eyes inexplicably moistening.

"Uncle... I understand..."

His nephew Ti'aj Kin's voice was very small, but Tikalo seemed to hear it. He stood at the edge of the ship, a smile rising at the corners of his mouth, watching the tribe fade from his eyes, becoming just him once more. The lonely old Maya turtle, swimming among the fierce Navarre crocodiles, always wore a confident smile, yet his heart trembled with fear. Who could understand him?

Mayan merchant Tikalo lowered his eyes, sighed softly in his heart. His face showed a calm smile, turned around, but saw another wise "old turtle". Old militia Chiwaco stood two steps away, gripping a long spear, with several spear-bearing sailors, looking at him with a half smile.

"Ah? Honorable Captain Chiwaco, what business do you have with me..."

"Take him down!"

The sailors rushed forward, pressing the unprepared Tikalo to the ground. Then, several ropes were tied around, securing him like binding a wild deer.

"Go! Lock him in the hold below the deck!"

Old militia Chiwaco's gaze was profound and his expression stern. He looked at the two young men beside him and instructed in a deep voice.

"Dark Snake, Didi, keep a close watch on him! Before reaching Cuba, do not let him contact anyone!"

"Yes! Captain Dad!"

The two nodded in agreement, their faces slightly excited, as it was their first time shouldering important responsibilities. The old militia smiled and nodded, rubbed both their heads, ready to leave. After a few steps, he remembered something, turned back and instructed.

"By the way! This hairless fox is most talkative. Tear a piece of cotton cloth to stuff in his mouth, and also stuff two balls of cotton in your ears. Don't let him speak except during meals!"

"At your command, Captain Dad!"

The crisp response of the boys floated on the flagship, blending into the waves behind the ship. The shining galaxy reflected on the vast sea surface. The waves rose, rolling the galaxy. And the fleet slowly set off, following the dream-like galaxy, disappearing under the Eastern moonlight.

Chapter 1092: The Second Kingdom Expedition, The Finale of the Lowland Maya

As April begins, the spring feeling arises. The sea breeze carries warmth as migratory birds fly north. The Kingdom's expedition fleet departs from Tail Village, heading east for one hundred and twenty miles, arriving at Crocodile Town near the coast, belonging to the Chel Divine Authority Tribe.

"The Chel Divine Authority Tribe is a small clan with tens of thousands of people. It is called a Divine Authority Tribe because its leader began as the Sun God Elder Priest of the Mayapan Kingdom. During

the rebellion of the Xiu Family, he fled to the northern jungle and established the clan tribe, and every military and political leader of the Chel Clan has been the tribe's High Priest."

Tikalo sits in the dark lower deck of the cabin, hands and feet tied, yet he wears a friendly smile. He looks at Priest Tomate and the old militia Chiwaco before him and patiently explains.

"The Chel Clan's population is close to a hundred thousand. Although smaller than the four major powers, in the loose northern coast, it is considered powerful. The clan's ruling center, eighty miles south in Heaven Water City (Izamal), known as 'the place where divine dew falls from the sky,' is a religious ancient city inherited from the Golden Age."

"Since the clan's initial leader was a revered Elder Priest of the Kingdom, they naturally view the Xiu Family, which caused rebellion, disrupted order, and destroyed the power of the Elder Priest, as enemies and remain friendly with the Kapul Family. As for our Kekum Royal Family, we are close allies with them. This northern expedition of the tribes is from their territory, borrowing the route and obtaining supplies."

Hearing this, Priest Tomate and Chiwaco exchange a glance and slightly nod. Tikalo sweeps his gaze with a smile and suggests.

"Respected leaders, I am familiar with the local Divine Descendant Nobility, why not let me..."

"Dark Snake, Didi."

Upon hearing detailed information, Chiwaco does not hesitate and points to the seated Mayan merchants, speaking soberly.

"Seal his mouth!"

"Huh?"

The ears of the two young men are stuffed with cotton, rendering them unable to hear clearly. Dark Snake is momentarily confused, while Didi reacts immediately, pulling out a piece of yellow cotton cloth and stuffing it into Tikalo's mouth, who wears a bitter smile.

"Keep an eye on him!"

"Huh?"

Seeing the confused duo, the old militia shakes his head. He points at the Mayan merchants and then at the two young men. With enlightened expressions, Priest Tomato finally speaks with a smile.

"Captain Chi, let's go!"

"Hmm."

The two ascend to the deck, where the sea and sky suddenly open up, and the fresh sea breeze refreshes one's spirit.

"This time, let's leave Puap on the ship, and I will disembark with you."

The old militia gazes at the small town by the shore and speaks leisurely.

"There is no shortage of fresh water on the ship, just need to replenish some food. We will go early and return early, leaving on the same day."

"Good!"

Priest Tomato nods with satisfaction. After considering, he adds.

"Then, for this translation, use the captured Toltec survivor, Usto. He should be fine with daily conversation."

"Sure! That Usto is not bold, should be no problem."

The old militia thinks slightly and agrees. The two leaders simultaneously lower their heads in sincere prayer.

"Chief Divine blessing! May the fleet have a smooth journey!"

The sun rises and sets, everyone hurries. The old militia commands the sailors to complete the ship's supplies. Priest Tomate sees the town's Divine Descendant Nobility, tells the Divine Revelation Prophecy, leaves a gemstone gift, and swiftly departs.

Afterward, the expedition fleet sets sail once more. The further they go east, the denser the coastal jungle becomes, spreading large swamps between the trees. Without a guide, such terrain could be deadly. The fleet travels east for two hundred and fifty miles to arrive at the next large supply village, Fire Salt Village.

Fire Salt Village is the ruling center of the Qi Jin Tribe. Indeed, this tribe's largest settlement is a coastal village. As the name suggests, it's the most crucial salt production site on the northern coast. Along the coast of Fire Salt Village, many small lagoons connect with the sea, evaporated by the sun over the years into high-concentration salt lakes. By blocking small salt lake outlets, they become numerous natural salt-evaporating fields.

This coastal area is the Peninsula's largest salt-producing region. The emergence of the Qi Jin Tribe is the coastal tribes' alliance to guard the huge profits of the salt lakes, resist various southern clans. The coastal land is ultimately barren, the Qi Jin Tribe mainly relies on salt trade to supplement food. Similarly, the tribes here don't spend much time farming and constantly feud with others for salt-producing land. Their customs are both united and fierce.

"The Qi Jin Tribe is a coastal tribal alliance with tens of thousands of population and no single leader overseeing all tribes, more of mutual aid and watchful cooperation among tribes. They also believe in the War God, Guardian God of merchants, Ek Chuaj. The Qi Jin Tribe is most friendly towards trading caravans. As for 'fire' in Fire Salt, it refers to the hundreds of red firebirds on the shore!"

Having not seen the sun for days, Tikalo's face is somewhat pale. He maintains a calm demeanor, explaining the power dynamics among the tribes gently.

"The southern inland Kapoor Clan has long coveted the salt-producing Qi Jin Tribe on the coast. Yet, the Qi Jin Tribe is quite united, with robust customs. They prosper through trade, don't need to divert a large population into farming, and with just sixty to seventy thousand people, they can mobilize over ten thousand tribal warriors to guard salt lakes. They also control the salt supply for various tribes, with weapons and equipment not weak."

Chapter 1093: Second Kingdom Expedition, End of Lowland Maya (Part 2)

"The Kapoor Clan and the Xiu Family are adversaries and cannot advance northwards with full force. Without full confidence, they have maintained peace with the Qi Jin Tribe. On one hand, they have wooed the western border tribes of the Qi Jin Tribe and continuously married into them, accepting them as clan members. On the other hand, they have secretly incited their vassal, the Tes Tribe, to dispatch troops from Kulubá and raid the eastern salt fields of the Qi Jin Tribe, depleting each other's strength."

Upon saying this, Tikalo's expression became stern, with a glint of wisdom in his eyes and a vigilant look towards the Kapoor Clan.

"To this day, cracks have emerged between the eastern and western tribes of the Qi Jin Tribe. The Kapoor Family is very patient, like a Water Serpent swallowing a beaver, slowly encroaching upon the Qi Jin Tribe. If they are given a few decades, they have a great chance to simultaneously annex the coastal Qi Jin Tribe and the vassal Tes Tribe. By then, with the income from the salt pits, the Kapoor Family will leap forward, surpassing the Xiu Family to become the most powerful force on the Peninsula!"

"So that's the situation!"

Priest Tomate patiently listened, contemplating. It seemed that the Qi Jin Tribe was like a wealthier, smaller version of the Putun Tribe. It was unclear if there was an opportunity to spread the fire of the Chief Divine here.

"Tikalo, the tribal leaders of the Fire Salt Village, worship Ek, the Guardian God of merchants. Is their faith devout?"

Upon hearing this, Tikalo thought for a moment and understood instantly. He paused slightly and explained.

"Respected Priest Tomate, the Qi Jin Tribe believes in multiple divinities. They don't mind worshipping another divine spirit. However, the Chief Divine of each of their tribes must be one of either the Sun God or the Guardian God of merchants."

"The Sun God? The Sun God worshipped by the Chel Divine Authority Tribe?"

Hearing this, Priest Tomate raised an eyebrow. He sensed something keenly and asked carefully.

"Are there any missionary priests from other tribes here?"

"Indeed!"

Tikalo nodded emphatically.

"The Sun Supreme God worshipped by the Chel Divine Authority Tribe was originally another guise of the Heavenly Serpent Divine, Itzamna. But after the split of the Mayapan Kingdom, to distinguish from the Heavenly Serpent Supreme Divine worshipped by the Xiu Family, both the Kapoor Clan and the Chel Tribe began to worship the Sun Supreme God. The hostility between both parties extended from territorial and political conflicts to the divine they worshipped."

"And in collaboration, the Chel Divine Authority Tribe and the Kapoor Clan continue to spread the belief in the Sun Supreme God among the western tribes of the Qi Jin Tribe. The fissures between the eastern and western tribes of the Qi Jin Tribe have therefore gradually expanded. Meanwhile, the Kingdom's desire to spread the Chief Divine's glory here means contending simultaneously with the Kapoor, Chel, and Qi Jin tribes... It likely requires a catalyst!"

Upon hearing some of these tribal secrets, Priest Tomate rubbed his brow, finding it a bit thorny. The fragmented Mayapan Kingdom engaged in interminable intrigue among its divisions. These Maya Divine Descendants, inheritors of a thousand-year legacy with developed writing and mathematics, clearly had more complex thoughts than the Highland tribes, excelling in every aspect.

"These eight hundred square miles of Lowland Maya are truly like a chaotic ant nest! To completely clean it up, only tens of thousands of Alliance troops crossing the sea can launch a Divine War to eradicate the thousands of Divine Descendants!"

Priest Tomate secretly resolved, yet outwardly remained calm. Unfortunately, the distance here is truly too far from the Alliance, and the jungle environment is extremely challenging, making it impossible to sustain military logistics. For a considerable period, the Alliance must maintain compromise and cooperation with the Maya factions.

"Unless... there is an irresistible force capable of completely shattering the Maya Divine Descendants' supreme rule, sweeping away these families and priests with millennia of deep-rooted, inherited faith..."

Two steps away, the old militia was also deep in thought. Tikalo glanced at him, his face pale, his demeanor adjusted to appear weak and powerless, and pleaded softly.

"Respected Captain Chiwaco, please allow me to go out for some fresh air! In the Fire Salt Village, the Kapoor Clan has caravan leaders specifically for buying salt, usually held by important clan members. The Kapoor Clan is a natural ally of the Kingdom, antagonistic to the Xiu Family. If you wish to communicate with the Kapoor Clan, I can act as a translator and bridge..."

Hearing this, the old militia raised his eyebrow. He looked at Priest Tomate and asked softly.

"Does the fleet want to make contact with the Kapoor Clan?"

"Hmm..."

Priest Tomate stroked his chin, pondering in silence. A moment later, he recalled the encounter with the Canul Guardian Clan, made up his mind, and looked at the old militia again.

"Captain Qi, what do you think?"

"Hmm... two leopards confronting each other in the jungle, flanked by a pack of native dogs. We've killed a cub of one leopard; what will the other leopard do to us?"

The old militia thought for a moment, laughing as he asked.

"Will they therefore come forward to ally with us?"

"Haha! That depends on what we really are."

Upon hearing the old militia's question, Priest Tomate laughed knowingly.

"If the fleet has eight thousand warriors, we are an unbeatable black bear, and the Kapoor Clan will come forward to ally and make amends. And if the fleet has two thousand warriors, we are a powerful Jaguar in the jungle, capable of intimidating various tribes and maintaining a favorable position in exchanges..."

"But now, we have only over two hundred sailors, over two hundred warriors, along with dozens of injured men. Even if the Kingdom's equipment gives us an edge, it cannot make up for the severalfold difference in strength."

Chapter 1094: Second Kingdom Expedition, The End of the Lowland Maya (Part 3)

The old militia man glared fiercely at Tikalo again, thinking about the injured crew on the ship. The Maya merchant shrank his neck, just about to speak, when he saw the old militia man point a finger, and shadows moved on both sides. Then, a piece of yellowed cloth, full of spit and extremely sour, was once again stuffed into his mouth.

"Mm...mm...mm!"

The old militia man shifted his gaze, not looking at the struggling old fox. He thought for a while and confidently drew a conclusion.

"The real knowledge of the alliance's strength is known only by Tikalo and the remnants of Mayapan behind him. So, in the eyes of the different parts of the Lowland Maya, we are just red falcons flying

from the West now. Though swift in flight, we may not even be able to defeat an ordinary native dog, let alone a jungle leopard!"

"Exactly! Without strength, there is no foundation for alliance. Even if allied, we would be oppressed, extorted for benefits, and even used as cannon fodder!"

Priest Tomate's lips raised, feeling a deep sense of camaraderie. Luckily, there's an old militia man in the fleet; if there were two Puaps, this exploration... Priest Tomate secretly shook his head, smiling as he made the decision.

"Since so, we won't stay here long! After a brief resupply, we shall head two hundred miles east to Sha Lake Town! Beyond Sha Lake Town is the last stop of the Lowland Maya, Ekab Port! Further ahead is Cuba Snake Island in the Eastern Sea! Chief Divine protect us!"

"Good! Chief Divine protect us!"

The two leaders of the fleet bowed their heads again, sincerely praying. Watching the two bow in prayer, Tikalo lowered his gaze, quieted down. He sighed softly, with both resignation and relief.

"Alas! If the Kingdom's gemstone served as capital, and the Kingdom's force as guarantee, using the Kokom family as a communication link, making alliance with the Canul Guardian Clan, Kapoor Clan, and Chel Divine Authority Tribe, together resisting the Xi Wu Family...with all forces balanced, Kokom family would not become a puppet of the Kingdom or any side!...But...forget it..."

Tikalo shook his head, no longer thinking much. He knew the Kingdom fleet would extricate from the vortex of Maya tribes, continuing to fulfill the exploration route. For the remnant of Mayapan, this meant a long wait and endurance.

The spring breeze warms, green all around. The Kingdom fleet continued its voyage, two hundred miles ahead, stopping at Sha Lake Town, trading gemstones, and spreading the prophecy of Divine Revelation.

Here is the territory of the Ekab Chieftom Alliance, over ten scattered small and large city-states, loosely forming a defensive alliance under the leadership of Yan Island Holy Land. They lack expansion

ambitions, their forces spread in the easternmost part of the peninsula, important cities along the coast. The inland territories of the chiefdom are mostly sparsely populated, lush and continuous jungles.

The Ekab Chiefdom is geographically isolated, transcending conflicts with various tribes, seldom involved in struggles. In Sha Lake Town, the fleet saw bustling trade activity, caravans coming and going endlessly, a scene of harmony. Here, the fleet also discovered a local Mayan oar-sail ship fleet, clearly transporting Divine Smoke from Cuba in the east, with sailors appearing Taino.

Yet, these Mayan fleets were cautious upon seeing the eastward Kingdom longship. They inquired about the Kingdom fleet's origins and destinations, trading tobacco for gemstones, but mentioned nothing about the tobacco source Cuba Snake Island.

After discussions between the old militia man and Priest Tomate, they also agreed to reveal nothing about the fleet's voyage aim, only claiming to trade tobacco. They completed the trade amidst mutual suspicion, after which local Mayan merchants watched with wary eyes as the fleet set sail again, heading to the northeastern port of the peninsula, Ekab Port.

Two days later, the Kingdom fleet preserved its strength, sailing over a hundred miles, arriving at the final resupply point, Ekab Port. A small coastal port, supplies relatively expensive but abundant. Sailors and Samurai of the fleet finally got a chance to disembark for a good rest.

Old militia man Chiwaco also found nearby Mayan villages, situating three to forty Kingdom fleet injured to recuperate in the village. Then, everyone held a dinner in Ekab Port, buying several large beasts hunted by locals, the Central American tapir.

"Oh? What kind of beast is this? Bigger than a deer, a lot of meat, not too bad...Hm, much better than a stink pig, probably similar to a crocodile. Wonder if we could take one back to breed?"

Huitu Puapu gobbled down meat, gulping fruit wine. He imagined bringing this beast home, wondering if His Majesty might like it.

"Locals say tapirs are like deer, vegetarian. Very clever, wild nature, quite strong resistance, can't be bred."

Old militia man Chiwaco chuckled, drinking a cup of murky fruit wine, said leisurely.

"Don't think too much! Fleet will rest well for a few days here, then cross eastward the sea. The vast sea, without any coastal reference, there could be storms at sea. These last few days, eat and sleep well! The rest of the journey, we'll wager our lives!"

Upon hearing this, everyone fell silent. Priest Tomate looked solemn, raising a cup of fruit wine before the night bonfire. He solemnly announced, leading everyone,

Chapter 1095: Evening in Five Mountains City, Apocalypse of Blood and Fire

April is the hope before spring plowing, and spring's essence spreads across the wilderness. In the northeast of the Yucatan Peninsula, the Kingdom's exploration fleet rests at Ekab Port. The crew repairs the ships, replenishes their spirits, preparing to sail east across the sea to Cuba Snake Island. Meanwhile, on the Mexican Plateau, tens of thousands of Totonac captives are being escorted by the Alliance's samurai, marching southwest, arriving outside Water Valley City to cultivate the fields.

The long wind blows, following the route of the captives, four hundred miles east of Water Valley City, reaching the source of many captives. This fertile land of struggle and battle, with numerous villages, abundant water sources, and fields stretching across the land, also has the western stronghold of the Totonac people, Five Mountains City.

At this moment, the eight thousand Feathered Serpent Legion is stationed along this four-hundred-mile route, transporting captives, covering the grain routes, while also capturing tribespeople along the way. Thousands of the Kingdom's Warriors form the army's blade, spreading out around Five Mountains City to capture captives. They form groups of hundreds, breaking villages and towns, capturing young men and women as prisoners. As for Black Wolf Torc, he personally leads four thousand Guajili Legion, four thousand Mistec Defectors Camp, and a thousand Imperial Guards Artillery Camp, besieging the precarious Five Mountains City.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!"

Ten Sun Divine Eagle Cannons are deployed outside Five Mountains City, unleashing roaring thunderbolts! Stone projectiles launch and fiercely strike the city walls of Five Mountains City, like the hurling stones of giant beasts. Occasionally, sharp stones pierce through wooden shields, shattering into a spray of wooden blades on the walls, bringing forth a mist of blood.

"Feathered Serpent Divine! Save your people!"

"Please, please bestow your divine power against the volcanic demon of the West!"

The air is filled with cries on the heads of Five Mountains City, accompanied by desperate wails. The City Lord of Five Mountains, Totonac Divine Descendant Xalapa, turns pale and trembles all over. He watches the dreadful Copper Beasts outside the city bombarding, feeling as if doomsday is upon him.

"What on earth is this?! How do the evil Aztecs harness such vast power? Could it be, as the fleeing Tlaxcala nobility said, this is the evil power of volcanic demons? If only I knew, if only I knew..."

Divine Descendant Xalapa's face is full of regret. Surrounding Five Mountains City are five hills, and although the city walls are low, the terrain is easy to defend and difficult to attack. He once believed this was an impregnable stronghold!

In fact, for more than a month before, the Aztec legions only besieged Five Mountains City, raiding everywhere, never forcibly attacking. He patiently awaited the withdrawal of the wild battle-hardened enemy due to exhaustion of supplies. But unexpectedly, he awaited the golden Copper Beasts of thunder!

"Boom! Boom! Boom!"

Ten copper beasts line up, roaring with an earth-shaking clamor, launching destructive stone projectiles. Such bombardment lasts only a few days, and the six thousand warriors and militia on the walls lose their courage. They witness the stones flying over the city heads, unleashing a mist of bloody cries. They cannot comprehend it, only thinking it is the divine power of the War God and Thunderbolt, feeling an unstoppable despair.

"If I knew it would be like this, it would have been better to hand over the fifteen thousand Tlaxcala tribes we received and give up five thousand able-bodied men... bow low and plead for the aggressive Aztecs to withdraw!"

Divine Descendant Xalapa grits his teeth, feeling only anger, unwillingness, and fear in his heart. Months ago, Aztec legions raided the borders, looting several Totonac villages, and engaged in battle with the scout warriors of Five Mountains City, both sides suffering casualties. Subsequently, he sent an envoy to inquire of the titular suzerain, "Why make a move against the compliant Totonac villages?" The response brought by the envoy came with terms he considered unacceptable at the time.

"The Alliance's Divine War Eastward, seeking to completely extinguish the divine descendants of the Tlaxcalan people! Five Mountains City dared to accept the eastbound fleeing Tlaxcalan tribes, it must be severely punished! You have ten days to hand over twenty thousand Tlaxcan people! If insufficient, fill in with able-bodied Totonacs!"

To hand over a full twenty thousand able-bodied tribespeople! Five Mountains City only has about 130,000 to 140,000 tribespeople, even after accepting ten to twenty thousand able-bodied Tlaxcalans, totaling merely 150,000 to 160,000 people. Suddenly handing over one-eighth, mostly able-bodied men, is completely unacceptable to the leaders, chieftains, and noble priests of the city! And with only ten days' time, everyone could not possibly reach a consensus on this sacrifice of interests. So, undoubtedly, Five Mountains City neither agreed nor refused, only thinking of stalling.

However, the Aztec legions, ready to move, faced no delay! Ten days later, Black Wolf Toltec personally led the assembled tens of thousands of troops, invading the interior of Five Mountains City. He personally commanded the vanguard, consecutively breaking several obstructing camps, unfazed, directly reaching the base of Five Mountains City! From receiving the final ultimatum to the appearance of the Aztec battle flags, it took merely twenty days!

"Despicable Aztecs! They were premeditated, as greedy as a jaguar! Fresh from devouring the mighty Tlaxcala Alliance, their reddened eyes now look eastward! At this moment, the leaders of the various bands of Totonac fearfully tug at each other, debating how much to deploy. By the time they mobilize and assemble, spending another month to arrive... I fear Five Mountains City will have already fallen! And I, too, must ascend to the top of the Great Temple, to the sacrificial stone..."

Thinking of this, Divine Descendant Xalapa's limbs tremble, sweating profusely. He clearly understands that as the most honorable divine descendant leader in the city, should the city fall and he be captured by the Aztecs, the consequences would be grave! He clenches his teeth, biting his lip, thinking chaotically for a moment, and then hurriedly shouts to his trusted aide.

Chapter 1096: Evening in Five Mountains City, Apocalypse of Blood and Fire (Part 2)

"People! People! Retrieve wealth from my palace treasury and reward the defending Samurai to boost morale! Then summon the Feathered Serpent Priest to conduct a ritual on the city walls, to soothe hearts and call upon the Feathered Serpent Force..."

"Swoosh swoosh swoosh!"

A fierce rain of arrows suddenly descends from below the city, bringing a howling death. Xalapa, the Divine Descendant, feels his knees weaken and immediately crouches down, the bronze arrows shooting over his head.

"Feathered Serpent Divine, protect me! Damned Red Hair barbarians! Damned barbarian Archers!"

Divine Descendant Xalapa curses angrily through clenched teeth and looks up again, and sure enough. Thousands of Red Hair Hunters, clad in Leather and Copper Armor, armed with Greatbows, are approaching below the city walls. They sprint fast and, as soon as they stand, continuously shoot sharp arrows, suppressing the defending army on the walls.

"Swoosh swoosh swoosh!"

A piercing wail suddenly resounds near Divine Descendant Xalapa's ears. He turns his head to see the Envoy, who had just delivered a message, visibly running and hit directly in the side by an arrow from the Red Hair Hunters, collapsing weakly and struggling in his dying moments.

"Damn it! Damn it!"

Divine Descendant Xalapa curses furiously. He doesn't have time to call another trusted aide before the thunder of the giant beast strikes again.

"Boom boom boom!"

Ten flying stone projectiles hit this section of the city walls accurately. One smashes beside Divine Descendant Xalapa, crushing three or four Personal Guard Warriors. Another stone skips over his head,

striking into the city and demolishing a hut. Seeing such concentrated bombardment, Divine Descendant Xalapa is finally convinced that the Mexica are targeting him, intending to behead him!

"Chief Divine, protect us! For the glory of the Divine, kill! Kill them!"

"Kill! Sacrifice the Divine Descendants in the city, annihilate the city's nobility! This is the mission of the Divine War!"

"The commander said! Break through Five Mountains City, and the women and wealth will belong entirely to the Warriors. He will take nothing! The first battalion to climb the city gets integrated into the legion with an extra share!"

"Roar roar! Attack the city, attack the city! Break Five Mountains City and become nobility for a few days!"

"The commander also said! Chief Divine witness! Win the siege, and the first battalion to climb will be fully integrated into the legion to become the main army!"

"Roar! Chief Divine witness! Become the main army, receive military merits, and be granted nobility! Vanguard! Vanguard!"

The wild howling, like that of wolves, comes from outside the city, growing ever closer. Divine Descendant Xalapa crouches under the shield on the wall, his face a mask of iron. He doesn't need to look; he only needs to hear that familiar Cloud People accent to know it's definitely those Mistek Defectors who serve the Mexica!

In recent days, he has seen through the Mexica's tactics. It's always Copper Beasts bombardment, Red Hair Hunters suppressing, followed by thousands of Mistec Warriors, with ladders, engaging in fierce battle to storm the walls wave after wave. Meanwhile, the Mexica's main body Warriors hold formation at the rear and don't participate in the bloody sieges, regardless of how brutal the fighting is on the walls.

Over the continuous days, over a thousand Warriors in Five Mountains City have been killed or wounded. The Militia suffered even heavier casualties, and there have even been routs. The morale of the Defending Army diminishes day by day, and it's unknown how much longer they can hold out.

"Feathered Serpent Divine, protect us! For the glory of the Divine Descendant family, hold Five Mountains City!"

Divine Descendant Xalapa presses his lips tightly, watching the walls teetering on the brink, finally dispatching his five hundred family Warriors. These elite Warriors burst forth with roars, clad in Leather Armor, fighting valiantly. They are the last pillars of the City-State, skilled in battle techniques and with tremendously high morale. The five hundred family Warriors ascend the walls, and after fierce fighting for a quarter, manage to drive the Mistec Defectors who climbed the walls away.

"Good! Good! Finally came out!"

On the hill, Black Wolf Torc, carrying the grand banner, watches the Defector Camp being driven off the walls and laughs heartily. Then, with a cold and stern expression, he unhesitatingly waves the Red Command Banner and gives a loud order.

"Sound the war drums! Order the Divine Blessed Throwing Squad to engage! As long as they survive, immediately integrate them into the main army, promoting them to Third-level Warriors!"

The so-called main army is like the Guajili Legion, the formal legion of the Kingdom. Warriors in the legion receive military merits and are granted nobility, enjoying various benefits within the Kingdom. Below the main army are the Defectors.

Black Wolf leads the legion in campaigns everywhere, amassing thousands of Warriors from different Tribes who have surrendered. These Defectors have battlefield experience, having seen bloodshed, making it too wasteful to kill them all. Relocating them to the rear for settlement poses a potential risk. Black Wolf has pondered for a long time and, recalling the Eastern tribes conquest once told by the Prince, developed this system.

"First, use force to intimidate the Defectors, then let them personally kill compatriots or nobility, cutting off any chance of return, and driving them out of their dens. Then, allow them to plunder and siege, unleash their inner wolves, turning them into wild wolves. The few brave and fearless, or those who

convert to the Chief Divine, are selected into the Divine Blessed Throwing Squad. The rest are organized into Defector Camps! Finally, give them a path upwards, let the wolves bleed and fight, gnawing at flesh and bones, tamed into biting watchdogs!"

At this thought, Black Wolf laughs heartily, feeling quite satisfied with himself.

"Haha! This warfare tactic, researched by me, Black Wolf, is unbeatable. The Kingdom doesn't need to spend excessive resources to gain a powerful and fierce siege cannon fodder. The trick is in having a leader of tremendous renown, fierce and decisive. The main body must be swift, fierce, and combative. Drive the wolves like tigers, to command effectiveness! Hmm, I must give this warfare tactic a resounding name, I'll call it... call it... Tiger Wolf Tactics!"

"Dong dong dong! Dong dong! Dong!"

As Black Wolf is immersed in his thoughts, the sound of intense war drums suddenly echoes. Amid the fervent prayers of the War Priests, the truly death-defying "wolf pack" is already mobilizing.

Chapter 1097: Evening in Five Mountains City, Apocalypse of Blood and Fire (Part 3)

"Praise the Chief Divine! Sacrifice for the Chief Divine! Roar!"

The fervent shouts suddenly echoed from the Mexica army, carrying a determination to die. The Divine Descendant Xalapa was startled, looking toward the sound, only to see over a hundred fierce Mistec Warriors, each holding a smoking clay ball, howling madly like a pack of wolves, charging towards the low city wall.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Sacrifice for the Chief Divine! Roar!"

The howling "wolf pack" raced rapidly, reaching within a hundred paces of the wall in moments. Seeing these fierce warriors charging, the Mistec defectors fighting on the wall suddenly panicked, desperately jumping off the wall.

"Huh? What's this?"

The Divine Descendant Xalapa was dumbfounded. Observing those warriors holding smoking clay balls, they were only dressed in light war clothes, without a single weapon on them. Were they here to die?

"Praise the Chief Divine! Sacrifice for the Chief Divine!!"

Deafening shouts came from below the walls again, followed by fierce and frenzied warriors climbing up. They climbed the low city walls, ignoring the Five Mountains City warriors coming at them. The first thing they did was throw the smoking clay balls in their hands into the nearest crowd!

"Huh! I seem to have heard... This is, this is?"

The Divine Descendant Xalapa frowned, seeing the smoking clay ball land not far from him. Two trusted aides, holding up shields, cautiously moved forward to investigate. Perhaps because of his splendid war clothes and the feather crown symbolizing his status, an unusually large number of clay balls, even four or five, were thrown at him. Wisps of blue smoke rose from the rolling clay balls, bringing the aura of volcanic demons.

"Aura of volcanic demons? Ah? This is! This is!"

The Divine Descendant Xalapa suddenly realized. He remembered the words of the fleeing Tlaxcala nobility, his face instantly turning deathly pale, reflecting the boundless terror of impending death, even his face twisted.

"Feathered Serpent Divine! No, no!..."

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!..."

The thunderous explosion, so close by, erupted right in front of his eyes. The exploding clay balls turned into the weapons of the God of Death, bringing an irresistible impact, shrapnel, and flames. The Divine Descendant Xalapa felt a sharp pain all over his body, then a sudden lightness. His consciousness instantly blurred, his vision darkening, feeling only a void, like flying on the clouds. Moments later, his mind reflected a serene dying tranquility and illusion. The supreme Feathered Serpent Divine emerged from the clouds, lowering its tricolored tail feathers, guiding the fallen Divine Descendant to the sky's Divine Kingdom.

"Am I... dead?..."

The last thought flashed through the Divine Descendant Xalapa's mind, then froze there. His upper half, in the aghast gaze of the family warriors, flew for a moment, then crashed heavily behind the wall.

"Family Head! Family Head!"

"The Divine Descendant is dead?... The Divine Descendant is dead!"

"This is, this is the evil method of the volcanic demons! How can mere mortals resist!... "

"Feathered Serpent Divine! Save us!"

After a series of thunderous blasts, the wall was in chaos, filled with death and disorder. The last family warriors were heavily battered, losing all the will and hope to fight. The Mistec defectors' camp let out an excited howl, pouncing like wolves again, the city was on the brink of collapse! At that moment, the defectors, their eyes red, exploded with endless killing intent and fighting spirit. Having gone through countless slaughters and deaths, they were no longer the noble's war dogs of the Teotihuacan Valley, but the fierce and ruthless pack under the Black Wolf!

"The city has fallen! Five Mountains City has fallen!"

The wolf pack climbed onto the city wall, howling as they charged into the city. The despairing cries of tens of thousands of Tototanak people echoed throughout the entire Five Mountains City just before dusk. Blood, death, and flames were about to descend with the night. Outside the city, the Black Wolf, full of pride, gave the final order to the thousand armored personal army.

"Armored personal army, enter the city, watch over these wolfhounds, don't get blinded by the killing! Control the granary temple, drive out the captured young men and women, then enroll the surrendering Totonac Warriors to recruit a new batch of wolf cubs! As for the wealthy Divine Descendant's Palace, noble estates, and merchant residences, let the wolfhounds vent their wrath. The whole army will plunder for ten days, carry away all the wealth and captives! After ten days, burn the city!"

With cold and merciless orders, the Black Wolf Commander-in-Chief gave the command, ignoring the blood-soaked scene before him. The Black Wolf squinted, watching the lamenting, fallen city-state, and lightly shook his head. His gaze once more turned to the dimming East at dusk.

The hills lay low in the East, the streams flowed Eastward. The terrain descended all the way, traveling a hundred and fifty miles to the East, reaching the prosperous coastal lowlands, the Totonac coast where the Kingdom fleet once anchored. It was also where Cortes had begun his fated journey, the Totonac people revered the western Holy Land, the Feathered Serpent Ancient City!

Chapter 1098: North, South, East, and West—The Ever-Expanding Kingdom!

Vines flourish, wild grasses abound. Migratory birds take flight northward, red cardinals chirp joyfully courting. The spring deepens, the highlands of Tlaxcala are suffused with vitality. Birds and beasts frolic in the sparsely populated basin, merrily journeying westward, singing gleefully. Until they encounter sprawling camps, meet the patrolling Mexica scouts, and the hunting bone arrows strike with precision, releasing a deathly cry, becoming the Samurai's fragrant evening feast.

"Great! The meat is crisp and tender, neither greasy nor gamey. Finely aromatic, distinct in flavor, the freshness lingers, a true gourmet wild game!"

Smoke rises from the Tree Snake City's large camp, it is dinner time. Xiulote sits cross-legged in the main tent, savoring the carefully roasted goose prepared by the chefs. He extends his chopsticks, takes a piece of goose meat, places it in his mouth, and chews slowly, showing satisfaction on his face.

This goose meat is very tender, similar to spring chicken, but with more chewiness and freshness. The prey was hunted by scouts at noon, desalted with spices in the afternoon, marinated with sea salt for flavor, then simmered on low heat in a copper pot, stir-fried with chili for aroma. It is then rushed to the King's table in the evening, ensuring optimal tenderness.

"The aroma of the goose meat, a delight that even immortals would long for."

The aroma fills the large tent, blended with the scent of tequila and fruit. Xiulote eats the tender goose meat, drinks a light tequila, then takes a bite of the soft corn steamed bread, and lightly tastes some sweet dried fruits. Finally, he exhales a satisfying breath, waves to have the dinner removed. A maidservant then brings refreshing flower tea and lights invigorating incense.

The scent of food dissipates from the ceiling, the comforting aroma of the incense rises again in the tent, signifying the end of a brief enjoyment. Xiulote sits cross-legged, straightens his back, and with a solemn expression, begins attending to the reports from various city-states.

"Great! Five days ago, the Black Wolf already captured Five Mountains City, took twenty thousand captives, and incorporated three thousand defectors!"

The first letter is a report from three to four hundred li eastward, a victory from Black Wolf Torc. Xiulote looks at the crooked characters and drawings on the letter, his lips curling. The Artillery Camp of the Imperial Guards, previously led by Camp Commander Tupa, is temporarily assigned to the Black Wolf Army. Tupa, originally a trusted aide of the Toltec, led the Artillery Camp to arrive less than ten days ago and successfully breached the Totonac's western stronghold, Five Mountains City.

"Over a few months, the Southern Army captured thirty thousand elderly and weak Tlaxcalans, and another thirty thousand able-bodied Totonacs. Adding the twenty thousand here, that makes eighty thousand people."

Xiulote retrieves the letter from Bertade a few days ago, glances at it briefly, and nods.

Outside Water Valley City, the military farm camp is already prepared, with the initial fifty to sixty thousand captives divided into camp units, managed by the Priest and the Samurai. The camp also retains two thousand Tlaxcalans from last year's farm training, to both appease the captives' hearts and serve as key personnel for the farm operations, facilitating organization and labor.

In short, the military farm camp is operating smoothly, with robust capacity. It opens its hungry maw, waiting for more captives!

"With the fall of Five Mountains City, the Totonacs have lost their western barrier, the affluent Seaside Lands open their gates. The coastal Totonac city-states will all be shaken! At this moment, likely envoys from the coastal states are on their way to the Lake Capital City, Tloquiditlan. And the Allied Forces from the states will truly assemble."

Xiulote unfolds the map, pointing eastward, from the plundered valley of Five Mountains City further east, through one to two hundred li of low hills, reaching the Totonac coast. Here, the Totonac tribes gather near various city-states, with populations numbering in the tens of thousands!

"From Five Mountains City heading east, one hundred fifty li straight east is the Holy Land, the Feathered Serpent Ancient City, over two hundred li southeast is the prosperous Golden Bay City... Black Wolf requests to continue sweeping eastward, to capture more population!"

Xiulote extends a finger, gently tracing on the unfolded map of the world. The eastern coast, never so close, now appears before him! This "unexpected" military action, happening very suddenly, quickly reached a climax.

"Nominally, the Totonacs are vassals of the Alliance. This campaign is a punishment for their acceptance of the Divine Descendant Nobility of Tlaxcala. After over two months of engagement, just one detachment of Black Wolf has captured the fortified Five Mountains City, sacrificed the divine and nobility within. With such shocking news, the Totonac city-states will certainly mobilize a large militia to defend, form allied forces, while sending envoys to the Lake Capital City seeking peace..."

Xiulote lightly taps the ebony desk, contemplating the situation's development. Two months ago, he reported the eastern border conflict to King Aweit. The King neither agreed nor disagreed, maintaining a tacit stance. However, according to some letters sent secretly, the next target of the Alliance's campaign is inevitably the directly rebellious Mistec and Zapotec people in the east.

"After all, the Alliance has many vassals, and the Totonacs haven't openly rebelled against the Alliance. To appease the hearts of the many vassal tribes, once the envoys from the Totonac city-states arrive at the Lake Capital City and beseech on their knees, promising more tribute... The King's decree for mediation might arrive in a month! And within two to three months, this 'unexpected' military campaign should appropriately conclude!"

"Recognize when enough is enough. It's impossible to truly rely on a single detachment to campaign a thousand li, to attack over 800,000 Totonac tribes... Oh, after the fall of Five Mountains City, the Totonac tribes should only number over 700,000."

Chapter 1099: Kingdom Expanding in All Directions

Upon thinking this, Xiulote had clarity in his heart and made a decision.

"Within two or three months, Black Wolf must secure a stable foothold on the Eastern Coast! With this foothold, the kingdom can build ships along the coast and send more samurai to the Eastern Maya and Cuba! And as for the foothold that needs to be captured..."

Xiulote extended his fingers, pondering and weighing between the Feathered Serpent Ancient City and Golden Bay City.

Which city-state's defense is weaker? Without a doubt, it's the Feathered Serpent Ancient City. The Feathered Serpent Ancient City is a religious city-state, attracting believers from various tribes and is an open market city-state. It has no walls, only simple wooden fences. On the other hand, Golden Bay City has low stone walls and is a central stronghold akin to Five Mountains City.

Which city-state has fewer troops? Again, it's the Feathered Serpent Ancient City. The number of tribes in each region should not differ greatly, but the Golden Bay City area is more affluent, with slightly superior tribes. Likewise, it is closer to the east and can garner more tribal reinforcements.

From a military perspective, the answer is clear. But in terms of sentiments, the Feathered Serpent Ancient City is the western holy land of the Totonac people, the legendary place where the Feathered Serpent City set sail eastward. Capturing it would mean that the Kingdom of the Lake and the divine descendant nobility of the Totonac, regardless of the east or west factions, would become bitter enemies!

Faced with thousands of fierce kingdom warriors, the western Totonac would have no choice but to endure silently. And if a few hundred strong expedition fleet were to return and stop in the eastern Totonac's city-states, then the hostile divine descendants from each state...

"Sigh! I wonder where exactly has the kingdom's expedition fleet reached? Over four months have passed, they should have already reached the Maya, but did they find Cuba?"

Within the tent, the divine smoke curled upwards, and moonlight streamed from above, making the night exceptionally bright. Xiulote stood up, gazing at the eastern sky, contemplating the seafaring expedition fleet as if thinking about a kite with a broken string. In this era, sailing always involved risking life and death. However, the Age of Exploration has already begun, aiming to connect the entire world!

"Great maritime exploration... Feathered Serpent Ancient City... Feathered Serpent Divine..."

Moments later, Xiulote realized something, his expression turned solemn. A murderous intent appeared in his eyes, and he turned back to his seat, striking his finger heavily on the Feathered Serpent Ancient City. Then, he picked up his pen to write, giving orders to Black Wolf in the simplest terms.

"Black Wolf, you have captured Five Mountains City and taken tens of thousands of prisoners, which makes me very pleased! When you return, you can ask for any reward you want. But you must continue to march east, within two months, push to the sea and capture the Feathered Serpent Ancient City! Do not leave any of those ancient Feathered Serpent Priests and divine descendant nobility alive!..."

At this point, Xiulote slightly lowered his eyes. This simple sentence announced the fall of thousands of heads. But the spread of beliefs is always accompanied by blood and fire, and unifying the world also means brutal martial prowess. Now marks the end of the Central American Warring States period and the beginning of the Age of Exploration.

"Go forth and execute, clean out the upper echelons of the Feathered Serpent Ancient City! I'll cover you with the alliance here. Once you capture the Feathered Serpent Ancient City, don't cause widespread destruction, preserve the temple and the citadel, and defend on the spot. You can counter-attack and continue to capture prisoners, but do not advance further into the Totonac's city-states,

triggering full-scale mobilization of various tribes... King Aweit may very likely step in to mediate, as for the specifics, it will become clear when the envoy from the alliance arrives!"

"And if the captured prisoners number in the thousands, they don't all need to be transported back. Station your army locally, have the prisoners farm the land and gather timber— the kingdom's shipwrights will arrive from the east within two or three months. The kingdom will set up a new shipyard on the Eastern Sea shore, and build longships quickly."

After writing this, Xiulote pondered momentarily. He turned his gaze southwards, showing a hint of reluctance, yet continued writing.

"Black Wolf, you need to establish a stable foothold on the Eastern Coast, and manage it patiently for several months. The Eastern Coast is over six hundred li from Tree Snake City camp, and you have to rely on yourself for decision-making! If food supplies fall short, request support from the Silver Raven Tribe in Crow City to the north. After the autumn harvest, Bertade will lead troops east to replace you!..."

Xiulote finished writing the letter, stamped it with the seal, and handed it to Guard Commander Ecatl. Ecatl skillfully sealed the royal decree and personally gave the letter to a swift runner from the trusted aides. The runner concealed the letter within his war clothes and, accompanied by a twenty-person guard escort, set out eastwards overnight. They would cover eighty li a day and reach the outskirts of Five Mountains City within five days. This was already the kingdom's fastest messenger!

"With the current level of communication, beyond four to five hundred li, taking ten plus days for a round trip, authority must be delegated... If the distance is further, eight to nine hundred li, each region would have to self-govern! As for three thousand li away Maya, five thousand li away Cuba..."

Xiulote's thoughts drifted far, his expression became pensive. A moment later, he snapped back to thoughts of the wilderness a thousand li away.

At this moment, Qingqiu County established by the Otomi Pamus State, is under the autonomy of the poet County Magistrate Balamo, taking a full two months for one round of communication. According to Balamo's latest correspondence, he has already organized an eight-thousand-strong tribal army, launching attacks all over the wilderness, subduing the southward migrating canine descendant tribes. He also dispatched two thousand tribal warriors, led by Chieftain Red Cat Mizili, to quietly head east and join the Red Crow Tribe's looting squad, heading south to plunder the northern factions of the Vastek people.

However, Qingqiu County lacks food, the land is barren, and its development is very low, unable to sustain too many full-time warriors and must secure support from the southern kingdom.

After the New Year, Poet Balamo sent four to five thousand impoverished canine descendant tribes south to Rivermouth County, exchanging them from Monkey Kuluka for a large batch of food, along with several hundred sets of armor and thousands of long spears. Monkey then integrated these four to five thousand canine descendants into various flag teams and dispatched over a thousand tribal warriors, all fully equipped, and incorporated them into the canine descendant militia.

At the beginning of February, Monkey Kuluka dispatched four thousand pike warriors, conscripted eight thousand canine descendant militia, and in grand procession headed downstream to pillage the Chapala Lake Region. While the northern Guamal canine descendants dispatched twenty thousand tribal warriors, launching a major southward offensive. Advancing from the north and east, they rampaged in a joint pincer attack, executing massive plunder, their fierce flames rolling in waves. Feather Prince was forced to completely retreat southwest, abandoning the northern and eastern regions of Chapala Great Lake, only relying on the rivers and lakes for arduous defense.

The newly arrived correspondence is Monkey Kuluka's war report, indicating that combined raids of the troop and trades with the Guamal Canine Descendants have captured another twenty thousand healthy Prepetcha men and women, prepared to be settled in the county for farming.

"Exalted Highness! Despite continuous warfare, Rivermouth County has instead prospered and thrived, with a population of 280,000 to 290,000. At this pace, it will soon return to the peak population of 300,000 before the western expedition in just a few years. And the continuous war spoils keep flowing from both eastern and western battlefields into towns and villages, enriching the canine descendant flag teams. If you were to return to Rivermouth County, you would surely be astonished!..."

After reading Monkey's letter, Xiulote smiled. The prosperity of Rivermouth County was naturally built on the decline of the Chapala Lake Region. Monkey Kuluka's repeated western raids in collaboration with the Guamal people left Feather Prince struggling, unable to cope. Over the years, despite no major battles, the Chapala Lake Region had become like a barren tree, stripped and chopped down to its last trunk.

"The kingdom just needs to mobilize three armies to march along the Lerma River and completely conquer the ripe fruit that is the Chapala Lake Region! However, such a monumental conquest I cannot delegate to anyone else, I must personally lead it!"

Xiulote looked at the kingdom's map and fell into deep thought. Conquering the Chapala Lake Region was easy, but establishing the kingdom's rule across a distance of six hundred li was more challenging than war and required immense human and material resources!

"Sigh, a thousand li of northern wilderness, the distant eastern seaside, the lower reaches of the western Lerma River, and the southern Tarsas River Mouth... the kingdom's reach has already spread too far, too wide to clench into a fist. And am I being too greedy, too impatient?"

Reflecting upon himself, Xiulote's gaze once again turned towards the kingdom's south. The fertile Apa Plain extending two thousand li via the Tarsas waterways was the kingdom's priority for focused cultivation. And at this moment, to solidify internal stability and establish quicker connections to secure long-term governance for the kingdom... A new construction plan was soon vividly outlined at his fingertips!

Chapter 1100: The Grand Plan!

The night grew deeper, the camp solemn, the tent warmed by the wind, smoke rising from the incense burner. The campfire danced within the big tent, illuminating a figure bent over writing, merging with the moon's shadow on the sky.

Xiulote sat at his desk, sometimes pondering for a long time, sometimes writing swiftly. The detailed kingdom map spread out before him, black towns listed in order, blue rivers surging north and south. The young king dipped expensive red paint, with each stroke, he connected the blue and black with the shortest red line into one!

"Kingdom roads, divided into three levels. First Level are village-level dirt roads. Clear away grass and trees from the road surface, flatten and trim raised areas, and fill sunken areas with earth, tamping it down to facilitate pedestrian travel."

At this point, Xiulote paused slightly. Currently, the roads within the Kingdom are basically such dirt roads, carried over from the Tarasco Kingdom era. These dirt roads formed from frequent use. But in the newly cultivated Apa County in the south, even such roads have not yet been formed.

"Second Level are county-level composite soil roads. Composite soil roads consist of clay and loam as the base, bonded with weathered lime, and filled with natural sand. These composite soil roads need to be manually compacted and maintained. In areas with lots of rain, abundant rivers, and dense vegetation, coal slag, mine slag, and gravel should be used as the base, filled with natural sand dug from the seaside, to protect against water and plants."

Xiulote looked at the map, pondering slightly. He had inquired warrior leaders transporting provisions, carefully investigated the logistics roads condition. Based on current conditions, composite soil roads should be the most suitable balance choice between the kingdom's productivity and material transport, and will be the focus of coming construction efforts. The qualifying judgment standard for composite soil roads is also simple.

"...The road surface needs to be sufficiently flat and firm, and the qualifying judgment standard is that it must facilitate quick passage for the kingdom's wheel carts!"

In the kingdom's logistics, metal-reinforced wheel carts are already widely used. The wheels are wrapped with vulcanized rubber, greatly increasing longevity, needing only monthly bearing repairs. However, this transportation mode remains as costly military gear. The wheel and bearing costs are extremely high, and rubber production is quite limited. Ordinary merchants and civilians in the kingdom cannot afford it.

"Third Level roads are kingdom-level stone roads. Using large stones as the base material, mine slag, natural sand as the filling materials, then bonded with volcanic ash cement or tar, compacted with stone rollers pulled by civilians. This class of kingdom stone roads need not worry about rain, nor plant roots. Tar has a toxicity that kills plants, while volcanic ash cement is more solid when soaked in water. The qualifying judgment standard for Third Level stone roads is to allow passage of loaded horse carriages and ox carts!"

Xiulote envisioned scenes of Roman stone roads, leading to a slight smile. He received a letter from the kingdom's construction chief Koskachi. Koskachi excitedly reported that they had discovered the "cement" indicated by the Divine Guidance. Cement poured walls gradually hardening, eventually becoming like a big rock, hard to break with an axe!

"Hmm, according to Koskachi's description, the volcanic ash cement hardening time is long, needing constant water addition... somewhat strange."

Amidst these thoughts, Xiulote scratched his head. He had heard of volcanic ash cement's name, but naturally didn't know the specific principles. He merely proposed directions and requirements, while actual practice laid with various directors, chiefs, craftsmen masters, and senior craftsmen in the Divine Revelation Place to explore.

"However, Koskachi would not dare deceive me, volcanic ash cement must have been researched out. And the craftsman Tan Bird, who first tested the cement, also deserves a handsome reward!... Promote to Craftsman Master, grant the honor of Divine Revelation Priest, additionally granting two hundred mu of land, twenty servants, and two hundred pounds of gold, to motivate craftsmen everywhere!"

Xiulote pondered briefly before making the decision. The kingdom's rear is stable; manpower is abundant; the craftsman numbers are explosively growing. Various projects are about to start, just at this time of bone market weight!

"Of course, volcanic ash must be transported from the Colima Mountain Region, and it is not so convenient. The alliance and kingdom have many volcanoes, let this Mountain Bird lead apprentices, run across various volcanoes, and Divine Mountain foothills, to find more volcanic ash cement raw materials!"

Craftsmen who establish merits and invent advances can receive generous rewards. They also need to teach the related technical know-how to apprentices. They have the power to choose apprentices but certainly must not keep secrets. Actually, the kingdom grants them superior social status and treatment, without needing to rely on secrecy to survive.

"Ah! Using volcanic ash cement for road construction is too lavish. This cement has limited production, excellent waterproof capabilities, should prioritize into reservoir and dam construction. In the kingdom south, river systems interlink, lakes intertwine, rainy seasons bring excessive precipitation, most requiring reservoir and dam for flood storage!"

Thinking of this, Xiulote laid down the feather pen, marking red circles near several lakes in the kingdom. Those are the projected reservoir and dam locations. Then, he picked up the map, carefully examining towns marked in black, rivers in blue lines, roads in red lines, lakes in blue circles, and reservoirs by the shores marked in red circles... all construction plans jumped directly onto the paper!

Overall, this time the kingdom's grand building plans include using the Second Level county composite soil roads to link major cities and important towns in various counties, north and south rivers. Next, both northern and southern water systems need dredging, clearing out river rocks. Finally, small flood prevention reservoirs and dams must be constructed around large lakes everywhere, to regulate rain season precipitation.