

## Civilization 1111

### Chapter 1111: Chieftain and Marriage

The sea breeze blew through the camp, the air was full of moisture. Alan sat in the tent, her eyes on the map, but her thoughts flew afar. She straightened up and touched the obsidian dagger at her waist, for the first time learning to think like a chieftain.

"Father, this time the tribe's migration northwards has been entrusted to me, and I shall do a good job! You must help me relocate the tribe quickly in time for this year's spring plowing. The lowland seaside is very warm, we can still farm even if we push it to late May or early June. We can delay planting a bit, but try to cultivate more land to harvest more food in the fall."

"That's right, we must hasten the migration northwards and try to cultivate as much farmland as possible! I've already selected the first batch for the migration north, all from loyal and compliant tribes. Tonight, I will gather the chieftains of each tribe and urge them to head north."

Amoxтли smiled and nodded in agreement. He looked at Alan, patiently listening to his daughter's thoughts, and also offered some suggestions.

"Of course, my daughter, to firmly grasp these migrating tribes, you must have a reliable tribal force! I will give you five hundred Red Crow soldiers, five hundred from the Long Spear Camp, and recruit a thousand tribal warriors from various tribes. And you must learn to win the hearts of the people, let the warriors hold you in awe, make them obey your commands. Alan, do you know how to do it?"

"Hmm... make the warriors awe-inspired, obey orders..."

Alan tilted her head and blinked. She thought hard for a while, and her eyes suddenly brightened.

"Father, I know what to do! I will organize an archery contest, let the warriors among these two thousand come and duel with me one by one. Then, as their leader, I will shoot them down, make them submit. This way, they will instill fear in their hearts and dare not disobey!"

"...Uh...shoot down all the warriors..."

Upon hearing this, Amoxтли froze for a moment and twitched the red hair on his head. In the tribe's archery contest, there was indeed a segment for duels. Both hunters would carry hunting bows, standing dozens of steps apart, then they would shoot at each other with blunt wooden arrows dipped in red dye. During the duel, both parties could run and dodge, shooting many arrows, but being hit even once would mean failure.

This kind of duel actually resembles actual combat, very much reflecting the archer's combat prowess. However, although the duel uses wooden arrows, it is still fierce, with a potential risk of injury.

Amoxтли pondered for a moment, then taught solemnly.

"Alan, defeating the warriors of various tribes is indeed a way to subdue the people. Yet this method is not very common. After all, not every leader has your excellent archery skills...like me, your father, I cannot defeat all the warriors. But they still loyally follow me, obey my commands, and are willing to fight for me. Do you know why?"

"Hmm...the reason..."

Alan blinked her eyes, thought for a long time, and then uncertainly answered.

"That's because, Father, you brought the tribe down from the wilderness. And with Father, everyone's life has improved?"

"Haha! This is indeed an important reason. A competent leader must bring benefits to the tribe, keeping the warriors hopeful!"

Amoxтли nodded with a smile, the corners of his mouth curved upward. After a few moments, he scowled and spoke seriously.

"Alan, my daughter. Our Wilderness Tribe does not rely on invisible and untouchable divinity to earn the tribe's trust, but relies on tangible and visible things. A competent wilderness chieftain must possess a certain degree of strength himself. Whether in archery, javelin, or axe and spear, he must at least master one to gain the trust of ordinary warriors. But for a large tribe, the more warriors there are, the less important personal force becomes for a chieftain."

"Father, then what is truly important?"

"Most importantly, make the right decisions to capture the hearts of the tribespeople and warriors."

At this point, Amoxltli paused, tilting his head and saying nothing. He recalled the methods used by Chichika the Great Chief to win over the warriors, as well as his collaboration with Zuma the Priest using divination to influence the warriors. Lastly, it was his leadership in the tribe's eastward migration, genuinely considering each tribe, gradually gaining support from everyone. After a while, he spoke again.

"Alan, the source of people's hearts can be many. Outstanding strength can evoke awe among the tribespeople. Acting with both kindness and might as a leader can make warriors obedient. And praying, divining in the name of ancestors, showcasing spells can also be effective. But fundamentally, it is about making the right choices that benefit the tribe!"

"Hmm...the right choices, beneficial to the tribe?"

Alan intertwined her fingers, supporting her chin, contemplating her father's teachings. Amoxltli patiently waited for a while before speaking earnestly.

"The right choices mean the interests of the tribe. As a chieftain, you need to provide tangible benefits to those who support you! We migrated eastward, escaping the conquest of the God of Death Great Chief, which benefited the tribe. We conquered the Vastek people, the tribe rapidly grew, no longer lacking in food, land, and population. These are also tangible benefits."

"It is precisely because of these decisions, which have benefited the tribes, that I have gained the prestige of the Great Chief, and the warriors sincerely obey. This time, our move north, I have spread the threat from the west and south, also to make the chieftains feel that moving north is most advantageous!"

Amoxltli raised his head and gazed into Alan's eyes, earnestly explaining the key points of leading the tribes. These were experiences he had personally gained, perhaps rough, but most suitable for the current situation of the Wilderness Tribes.

"Alan, my daughter, a person cannot fight the tide, nor should they stand in front of charging buffalo. Instead, you should ride a small boat, moving forward with the tide. Avoid the buffalo, follow their footprints. The so-called tides and buffalo are the momentum and interests!"

"Ride the tide, chase the buffalo?"

Alan pressed her lips together, her thoughts growing increasingly thoughtful. She brushed her short hair and gripped the dagger at her waist. She turned to gaze south, the direction of the Aztecs. According to her father's explanation, the tribe's northward migration was to avoid the tide from the south... She gazed at the distant south for a while before asking softly.

"Father, can I ride the buffalo, blow the horn, and stir up high tides?"

"Hmm? Ride the buffalo, stir up tides?"

Hearing such words, Amoxltli was stunned. He widened his eyes and carefully looked at the daughter he had personally raised. Alan straightened her spine, with a resolute and bright gaze, similarly watching him. After several breaths, Amoxltli suddenly laughed happily.

"Alan, I am glad you have such aspirations! However, to control the momentum, you must have sufficient strength to gradually stir up the waves. Gigantic buffalo thunder across the wilderness, kicking up a vast sky of dust. As long as they do not stop, no one can block them. Our Red Crow Tribe will be like buffalo, continually moving forward, continually growing stronger..."

"And if one day, you can sit atop a four-legged giant beast, blow the horn, and command the thousands of tribes in the Northern Land, then you will be able to stir high tides and surge towards the homeland in the south!"

At this moment, Alan's eyes were like the brightest stars in the night sky. Her silent face, for the first time, showed the solemnity and dignity of a chieftain. A moment later, she nodded gently.

"I will, Father."

The tent remained quiet, with a faint fragrance of herbs wafting through. Amoxltli brewed some herbal tea, handing a cup to Alan. The father and daughter drank tea, discussing the specifics of the northward migration. After a round of discussions, Alan summarized.

"Father, give me another batch of farming tools, some elderly farmers skilled in agriculture, plus the Chief God Priest sent by the Alliance who knows farming. This season's planting must ensure that the migrating tribes achieve a good harvest. This way, subsequent tribes moving north will face much less resistance. And after the autumn harvest, I plan to lead two thousand warriors, recruit two to three thousand militia, circle the periphery of the Lake Region, and summon the various tribes along the way."

"Hmm, not bad. When a jaguar arrives in new territory, it must roam around, letting the surrounding birds and beasts know."

Amoxltli expressed agreement. In fact, if it weren't for him needing to stay in the south and constantly watch the situation of Otter City and the Mexica army, the autumn patrol should have been done by him. But if his daughter Alan could take up the task, he would gladly let go.

After all, in the vast northern wilderness, and even on the larger plains further north, matriarchal clans still exist. Many tribespeople only know their mothers and do not know who their fathers are. An outstanding female leader can actually gain more support than a male leader and often lives longer. Of course, this premise is without a husband sharing power by her side.

Thinking of this, Amoxltli touched his forehead, feeling inexplicably irritated. He lowered his eyes, pondered for a while, then looked at Alan and asked.

"Alan, you are not too young anymore. After this year, you will be twenty years old! Many girls in the tribe your age have already given birth to two children... Ah! Alan, my daughter, what kind of husband do you want?"

"..."

Alan lowered her head, her face steady, without speaking.

"Ah! Every time I ask you, it's like this, silent and saying nothing. Although I don't want you to marry either, daughters must marry someday."

Amoxтли sighed. He tugged at his hair, gritted his teeth, and asked in a somber voice.

"The warriors of the Red Crow Tribe all want to marry you. Several of the Divine Descendants of the Vastec people, who are quite good-looking, have also come to propose. The chieftains of the Bosalos people have said you can choose anyone. According to their tradition, a female chieftain can have several men. Oh, and Zucata of the Long Spear Camp has asked several times for Chipawa."

"Alan, my daughter, of so many men in the tribe, who do you fancy? Tell me. Tonight I will arrange for him to be sent to your tent!"

#### Chapter 1112: Eagle Shooter Alan

There was no sound in the tent, as if it were the silence from deep within the heart. Alan hung her head, showing no expression on her face, lost in thought. After a long while, she touched the dagger at her waist, stood tall, and answered loudly.

"The eagle of the wilderness never stays in the jungle; it belongs to the vast sky. I don't want to marry, nor do I want to get pregnant and bear children for others. I am the best Hunter in the tribe, meant to run in the wilderness and slay the fiercest wolves! I want to be like you, leading thousands of warriors, conquering far and wide, defeating all strong enemies!"

"Besides, father, didn't you also not marry? And the old Chieftain, wasn't he also unmarried? Being an outstanding warrior and an excellent Leader has nothing to do with marriage!"

"Ah...eagle of the wilderness, belongs to the sky...just like me..."

Looking at his stubborn daughter and listening to her words, Amoxтли's eyelids twitched. He rubbed his face, feeling both gratified and a bit anxious. After a long pause, Amoxтли forced a smile and said.

"Alan, I am glad you have such aspirations. The life in the wilderness is fraught with upheaval, with repeated severe cold waves and brutal migrations devouring many tribes... Kakalo grandpa and I didn't not marry; we lost our wives and children. These years, the tribe has always been running on the edge of

death, without the leisure to think about these things. But now, we have settled down, no longer needing to worry about survival."

At this point, Amoxтли's eyes glistened, speaking from the heart. His face showed signs of weariness and sorrow, and his words became full of emotion.

"Alan, our Red Crow Tribe, after these years of hardship, is now stronger than ever before! However, I only have one daughter, and we are too few in number. Men who fight hard in the wilderness often carry hidden injuries. I'm already old, not knowing when I might suddenly die. My greatest wish now is for you to marry and bear children..."

"Stop!"

Alan reached out her hand to cover Amoxтли's mouth. She frowned, thought for a moment, and answered in a deep voice.

"Father, the tribe has settled down, and everything is getting better. We father and daughter rely on each other, like the great Cactus of the wilderness. The great Cactus silently roots on the hills, unafraid of hardship and cold winds, but if it is planted in the moist and warm Seaside, its roots will rot...So, you can't expect me to marry and have children; that's not my aspiration!"

"Well, father, you can marry again! So many women in Vastec, you could marry several! I also want brothers and sisters, you could have many children!"

"Ah!... I'd give birth to what, it's infuriating!"

Amoxтли's forehead veins bulged. He raised his palm to fan over, hitting Alan on the head a few times. Alan quickly dodged, springing up on the spot, as agile as a lynx. She touched her head; her father didn't use much force, so it didn't hurt too much.

"Haha! Father, your reactions seem to be slower, you indeed are getting old. Why don't we go to the training ground tomorrow and have a contest with the Long Spears..."

Alan's movements were nimble and valiant. She smiled confidently as she moved swiftly, attempting to escape the tent.

"Alan, come back here."

Amoxltli lowered his face and spoke lowly. Alan stopped in place, looking at her stern father, she pricked up her ears to listen.

"My daughter, what kind of man would catch your eye in the end? You have to give me an answer, and not always brush me off."

Upon hearing this, Alan's expression changed. She turned around, back facing her father, looking at the sky outside the tent, where there were eagles flying high.

"Father, I wish to be a high eagle, reaching the most treacherous mountain peaks in the wilderness. Only if he flies as high as I, catches up with me, can he be my man!... Thus, he must be an exceptional hero!"

"Either he can lead a powerful army, defeating us to the point of no escape. Or he possesses unparalleled archery, surpassing me, earning my sincere respect. Or..."

At this point, Alan paused, a rare gentleness flashing in her eyes. She instinctively touched the dagger at her waist and finally said.

"Or, he must make an impression on me, so unforgettable!"

After saying this, Alan lifted the tent flap, leaving without looking back, carrying her Greatbow. Amoxltli watched his daughter's figure, and after a while, he sighed deeply.

"My mountain eagle... You will soar, flying higher than the Red Crow!"

Days later, the Red Crow Tribe moved in large numbers. Alan, wearing Leather Armor and feathers on her head, stood high on a hill. She gazed at the two thousand warriors below the hill and the first batch



of migrating tribespeople, her heart stirring like an eagle spreading its wings for the first time. The Red Crow Warriors all looked at the most beautiful Hunter of the tribe, waiting for her command.

Alan didn't speak, just waited quietly, even her breath became long. Until several northbound wild geese flew in formation to the North, she suddenly raised her Greatbow, gripping three Feathered Arrows, and shot into the air like lightning!

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!"

Three arrows were released in succession, accompanied by the whistling of death, precisely aimed at different directions! Two mournful cries came from the sky, and the geese flocks scattered in panic. In the shocked eyes of the Red Crow warriors, three geese struck by the arrows fell from the sky, two hit in the body and one pierced through the neck!

With rapid succession, three arrows hit the flying geese. The Guajili tribes placed great importance on Archery, and upon witnessing such Divine Shooting, the hills fell into silence.

Alan's lips curled up, raising her head proudly, and she lifted her Greatbow high. Moments later, a booming cheer exploded from below the hill, drowning out the whole sky.

"Roar! Roar! Divine Archer, Divine Archer Alan!... Shooter of geese...Eagle Shooter..."

Soon, five hundred Red Crow warriors, five hundred Spear Militia, and a thousand warriors from various tribes, all raised their Spears fervently, cheering wildly. They looked up at their proud, confident, and radiant female Leader, filled with excitement and shouted themselves hoarse.

It took a while for Alan to lower her arm with an air of authority. Her face was flushed, her eyes shone brightly, and her calves trembled slightly. She clenched her Greatbow, looking at her tribe, full of joy, and loudly declared.

"From today onwards! I am your Leader, Eagle Shooter Alan! You shall obey my commands, and I shall lead you to victory and Wealth!"

Listening to Alan's declaration, the tribal warriors were silent for a moment, then they cheered again in low voices. They trusted Amoxtli the Leader, and they trusted his daughter. They revered Alan's archery skills, her courage, and her beauty. All of this marked the starting point of Alan's journey.

Alan looked around at everyone, a bright smile on her face. Her heart was clear of distractions, filled only with an upward fighting spirit, transformed into a proclamation in her mouth.

"Depart, follow me North! By Warrior Lake, a new Red Crow Land awaits!"

#### Chapter 1113: Kingdom Merchant Fleet, Northern Trade Route

April reached its end, the sea breeze became more humid, and the weather turned scorching hot. Zuwaro, tanned and dark, stood at the bow of the ship, gazing into the distance. The vast sea stretched endless and boundless, the long journey coming and going, familiar sights also unfolded before his eyes. Not far away, three long rivers flowed from the East, converging and dispersing as they all streamed into the boundless Western Sea. And a low yet prosperous City-State appeared on the fertile land where the rivers entwined.

"Ah! Praise the Chief Divine! Northbound for four thousand miles, then returned three thousand miles. Sailing back and forth seven thousand miles, taking more than three months, the fleet has finally returned to the land of the Tekos, arriving at Three Rivers City! And from here, heading southeast for another thousand miles, leads back to the kingdom's seaside, at the mouth of Tarsas River. This awe-inspiring and long journey is finally nearing completion!..."

Reflecting on this, Zuwaro felt a wave of emotion. As a Priest from Apa County on the Prepetcha, in the past twenty years, the largest lake he knew was Lake Ato, measuring over a hundred miles long. The longest journey he had ever made was merely the three hundred-plus miles from Apa County to Qinchongcan Capital, to attend Divine Power University.

However, when he graduated with excellent grades from the Divine Power University at the Capital City, an order came from the Chief Minister, the Sage Jatili. And this order itself originated from the will of Your Majesty. In kingdom affairs, young priests graduating from the Divine Power University are always given priority consideration.

"Chief Divine bears witness! Northbound for four thousand miles, scouting intelligence along the way, stationing personnel in familiar tribes, trading coal rock, and extracting guano rock..."

The newly appointed Priest Zuvaro, full of reverence, embarked on leading the merchant fleet, perfecting the northern trade route through the long journey. A wide world never imagined before, swiftly emerged, facing him head-on. And at this very moment, after traversing no less than seven thousand miles of waves, he had slimmed down, tanned into a piece of black charcoal, with only a pair of bright eyes constantly gazing into the distance.

"Supreme Main God, thank you for your protection over me!...What a vast sea, what an endless Northern Land, what turbulent waves!"

Zuvaro prayed quietly, observing the twenty-plus catamarans nearby, looking at the cargo on board, and gazing at the wind-worn Samurai and sailors. Scenes of navigation memories flashed through his mind.

"More than three months ago, I led a fleet of thirty-four catamarans, over four hundred Samurai sailors, carrying gemstones, weapons, and spices, departing from the Talsas River Mouth. We first arrived at the land of the Southern Ticos, trading along the coast of Fire River Plains. In recent years, various Colima tribes subjugated to the Kingdom of the Lake, trade between both sides became frequent, and a trading town has emerged along the coast. Cuyutlán, known as "the land of palm tree fruits", Palm Town. Around Palm Town, many have already been infiltrated by long-distance merchants from the southern kingdom. According to the traditions of the kingdom, long-distance merchants must shoulder the mission of gathering intelligence..."

Zuvaro squinted towards the distant southeast. Palm Town was six or seven hundred miles away by the sea, the first critical town on the northbound trade route. The second critical town is where the fleet is currently, Three Rivers City.

"At Three Rivers City, the Telali merchants who submitted to the kingdom, Telali, took six or seven ships and seventy to eighty people, separating from the main fleet. His mission was to give gifts, to forge alliances with the great chiefs of Three Rivers City, and to scout detailed intelligence on the Northern Tekos tribes. This merchant, although lacking in faith towards the Chief Divine, has many years of connections with Northern Tekos tribes, also greatly intimidated by the kingdom and Your Majesty, should not cause any trouble..."

Zuvaro pondered slightly, thinking. Some great chiefs in Three Rivers City had once planned to attack the kingdom's exploratory fleet. One of merchant Telali's tasks was to investigate the tribes and chieftains who participated in the attack and seek protection from other great chiefs. Before reliable

news arrived, the main merchant fleet he led would bypass Three Rivers City to resupply at a Tekos village dozens of miles away, where the chieftain was more reliable.

"Chief Divine bears witness! When the kingdom's great army arrives, they will send each of these daring tribes and chieftains to heaven to meet the Chief Divine!"

Zuvaro clasped the Sun Amulet, prayed silently, and secretly vowed. He dispatched a small boat, carrying a few sailors to notify merchant Telali in the area around Three Rivers City. Afterwards, the kingdom's merchant fleet set sail again, passing by Three Rivers City without entering.

"The northern trade route is indeed desolate. Three Rivers City, of Northern Tekos, is the last City-State along the route. After passing through Northern Teotihuacan Lands, along the coast, and then northwest for six hundred miles, a great river merges into the Western Sea. This strategically located rivermouth is the third important node on the route. The fleet can set up an encampment here, replenish freshwater, fish, and hunt birds and beasts that come to drink water..."

"However, when we landed at the rivermouth, and set up the encampment by the riverbank abundant with prey, we unexpectedly encountered a fierce group of Huichol people (Huichol), from the Torpan Tribe (Teopan)."

Zuvaro looked towards the North, his expression fluctuating. Ten days ago, they returned from Fish Mountain Village of the Totome people, rowed continuously for over four hundred miles, before they tiredly docked at the Big River Mouth to seek rest. Yet no one had anticipated that the Torpan Tribe had just migrated to the area near the rivermouth, during the sacred and ancient ritual of Mitote.

This inherited ritual bore conspicuous wilderness atmosphere. More than a thousand Torpan tribespeople first migrate for several dozen days, then hunt massive bison or packs of coyotes. After obtaining these beasts' entrails and skulls, the tribes would follow the guidance of the wilderness Priest to find a vast or towering site of divinity.

Then, the wilderness Priest would make offerings to the Heavenly Divine and the Earth Mother at the divinity site, praying for Their Divine Power to descend. Meanwhile, the wilderness warrior tribesmen would pick special cacti and sit relying on nearby trees or rocky hills, consuming hallucinogenic pine cones. These tribal warriors would close their eyes, murmur to themselves, attempting to communicate with the spirits in the dream, gaining enlightenment from heaven and earth. As for the Leader of the tribe, together with the wilderness Priest, they would use beasts' skulls and blood for divination, to decide on settling here.

To the migratory Huichol people, such a ritual was extremely important, lasting several days to decide migration, settlement, war, even survival, and must not be disturbed by outsiders. Around the ritual site, many Scouts were sent by the Torpan Tribe, lurking in the mountain forest, ensuring the ritual continued.

The kingdom's merchant fleet, heading north, had once supplemented freshwater here and scouted the surrounding conditions. So when they returned south, barely making any precautions, they landed on the riverbank and camped to rest. Yet, as dusk fell and night descended, danger followed. The people camped on the riverbank were directly surrounded by hundreds of fierce Torpan tribal warriors.

"Ah! It's truly the protection of the Chief Divine! During that dangerous moment, both sides aimed Long Spears at each other's foreheads, just a tiny bit away, I would have gone to the Divine Kingdom!..."

Recalling that evening looming with peril, sweat seeped from Zuvaro's forehead, and his heartbeat slightly quickened. He shook his head firmly, pondering the reaction of the Huichol people, unable to resist dwelling on the puzzle.

"How strange! Why would this tribe say..."

Chapter 1114: Centuries Ago, Upstream of the River

"Praise the Supreme Main God, Huitzilopochtli! Sacrifice for the gods, fight for the gods!"

In the dim night, faced with an unexpected encirclement by the Wilderness Tribes, Zuvaro's limbs trembled, and fear arose in his heart. He reached out, clutching the Sun Hummingbird Talisman on his chest, trying to muster courage, loudly praying and shouting.

"Everyone, get ready! Follow me back to the ship!"

The camp was not far from the docked fleet. He was ready for a fierce battle, intending to lead the hundred Samurai and sailors ashore to break through the hundreds of enemies encircling them and return to the ship overnight.

"Hmm? Huitzilopochtli? Hummingbird, on the left? Located above, the Sage Leader?"

However, upon hearing Zuwaro's prayer and shouts, a resolute chieftain with a feather crown and facial tattoos stepped forward with a javelin from among the hundreds of tribal warriors. His sharp eyes stared at the Sun Hummingbird Talisman on Zuwaro's neck, scrutinizing his ritual robe embossed with Divine Runes, with a look of confusion and surprise. After a few moments, he finally spoke in the ancient Uto-Aztecan language.

"Huichol, Wixárika, Teopan Tribe. We, the Huichol people, Teopan Tribe, follow the guidance of blood and the eagle. Are you, the tribe on the ship, also a branch of the Huichol people, following the guidance of the Divine Hummingbird?"

Upon hearing the chieftain's words, the newly appointed Priest Zuwaro stood still. Although the language was peculiar, he could understand it, even closer to the Mexica language than Prepetcha from the Lake Region. Zuwaro's thoughts raced, recalling the lectures on common origins at Divine Power University, and he hesitated, lowering the copper spear in his hand, and asked in the Mexica language.

"Friends, we come from the Mexica Alliance. The alliance began with tribes from Aztlán... We follow the guidance of the Sun and the Hummingbird, worshiping the Supreme Main God who holds lightning and javelins... Are you the Huichol people? Where are you from?"

"Worship the Sun and Hummingbird, the War God wielding lightning and javelins? Taking the War God as the father god? That's strange... However, the War God of lightning is indeed among the gods!"

Hearing Zuwaro's description, the leader of the Teopan Tribe, Visaka, raised an eyebrow. He pondered for a moment, then carefully observed the Kingdom's Warriors in the camp, their fine weaponry, and equipment, and their determined expressions. After a moment, Visaka howled like a wolf, and the Teopan Warriors lowered their stone spears, abandoning the threat of attack, exhibiting hints of goodwill.

"The Huichol tribe on the ship, I do not know where you come from, but we must have common ancestors, and we are not enemies! The War God with lightning and javelins is among the mountain Huichol people's gods and is an ancient god. Sun Father Tayaupá, Rain Mother God Nacawé, Divine Eagle Star God, Water Serpent Cloud Divine, Red God of Death, Corn Goddess, and the War God wielding lightning are among the important deities..."

Visaka revealed his chest by pulling aside his war clothes, showing a tattoo of the Sun Father. The sun was vast like the ocean, emitting wave-like light. In the center of the sun was a red heart.

"The gods gaze upon the world, ruling over the red sky, earth, and sea together. And we Huichol people are the red hearts migrating on the rivers of the wilderness..."

The newly appointed Priest Zuvaro stared wide-eyed at the tattoo. This worship of the red sun and heart seemed present on the alliance's royal flag and on the Priest's Heritage Tablet. Thinking of something, his lips went dry momentarily, and after a long silence, he finally spoke, invitingly.

"Friends from the Teopan Tribe, we have never harbored enmity. I believe we can sit down by the campfire and have a good conversation for a while..."

The long night returned to tranquility, with low conversations arising now and then. The two leaders talked at length, from heritage, mythology, rituals, to divinities, increasingly sensing an ancient closeness but also recognizing present differences.

It's like a forked river, flowing through hundreds of years, reflecting the same old shadows. But the scenery on both banks of the river has changed completely. Looking back, you can vaguely see the upper reaches of the river. And downstream of the Long River, the powerful Mexica Alliance has unknowingly grown into a mighty sea!...

Zuvaro was silent for a long time before speaking under the morning sun's first light.

"Respected Chief Visaka, how many tribes of the Huichol people are there now in the mountainous wilderness?"

Visaka scratched his chin, the feather crown on his head swaying in the wind. His eyes flickered, observing Zuvaro's expression, and answered in a deep voice.

"The tribes migrate everywhere, chasing prey and grass for half a year and planting corn and beans for the other half. No one knows how many tribes inhabit this wilderness spanning hundreds or thousands of miles. But tribes like ours, the Teopan, numbering one or two thousand, there must be twenty or

thirty. And larger tribes can't survive on this land and must fight southward to capture more fertile valleys."

"In the southeastern highlands, the Guajili people were once hostile to the tribes, clashing fiercely. But a few years ago, a cold snap moved south, causing heavy casualties for all tribes, many losing contact. The large tribes of the Guajili have gathered together and migrated south. I know that two large Huichol tribes have moved south into the Guajili's territory, living mixed with the local tribes..."

Upon hearing this, Zuvaro raised an eyebrow. Twenty or thirty tribes, each with a thousand or two people, amounts to forty to fifty thousand people, along with smaller scattered tribes and a few large tribes migrating south, likely totaling seventy to eighty thousand people. This scale, compared to other wilderness tribes, is neither large nor small. The land across the wilderness is still too barren.

As for the land of the Huichol hunters and farmers, it lies in the western and northern wilderness. In the southeast, it borders the silver-rich land of Sakascat with the Guajili people, and in the northwest, they have had contact with the mountain Totopehc. Such a migratory and warlike tribe has significant linguistic and religious similarities with the alliance.

"Behind these similarities might be a shared origin, dating back hundreds of years. If we can ally with them and gradually assimilate... the Kingdom in the northwest of the world can truly establish a solid stronghold on this northern route!"

With this thought, a sincere smile appeared on Zuvaro's face. He reached into his bosom, took out a golden Sun Hummingbird Talisman, and solemnly presented it to Visaka. On this northern expedition, he brought and distributed many such talismans.

"Praise the Supreme Main God, Huitzilopochtli! He grants us a journey like lightning, uniting us with ancient kin thousands of miles away! Come, brother Visaka, let us have a good chat... Perhaps, you may consider settling here at this Teopan Rivermouth."

"The land at this rivermouth is quite fertile. Once you master the farming techniques, you can harvest a stable supply of food. And at the rivermouth's coast, there is fishing. As for shipbuilding and fishing techniques, our tribe on the ship can teach you..."



Hearing Zuwaro's account, Chief Visaka furrowed his brows. Instead of joy, he showed caution. He looked into Zuwaro's eyes and asked each word clearly, in a deep voice.

"Zuwaro, my friend. In the wilderness, there is never free food without cost. Hunters only release bait while hunting... Since you exhibit so much goodwill to our Teopan Tribe, what kind of return do you seek from us?"

Hearing this, the new Priest Zuwaro lowered his eyes. After a while, he gazed at the leader of the Teopan Tribe and solemnly replied.

"The Supreme Main God shines upon the red world, from the southern highlands and lowlands to the northern deserts and mountains! We will not force distant kin but bring you the brilliance of the Main God, an untold prosperity and strength."

"The price we seek is to have the revered Main God enter your hearts to become the only Supreme Divinity! And from then on, by merging the blood of our brotherly tribes, you will gradually become one with us..."

#### Chapter 1115: Abundant Mineral Resources and a Bold Proposal

Layered clouds drift across the azure sky, while the blue sea sparkles with ripples. Fresh verdant hues sprout from the coastal forest, and the long river girdles like a jade belt. The scenery of the Northern Land seaside resembles nature's most magnificent painting, outlining a colorful future.

The newly appointed Priest Zuwaro gazed at the mountains and seas along the way, heading toward home, yet his thoughts leisurely drifted northward.

Not long ago, after an unexpected encounter with the Torpan Tribe, the fleet stayed for an entire day. At the initial meeting, no deep agreements were reached; both sides merely confirmed their friendship and expressed closeness. He gifted Chief Visaka ten bundles of cotton, ten bags of cocoa, and ten Long Spears as tokens of friendship. Chief Visaka, in return, offered two baskets of unused Jin Shi, Silver Ore, and flash stones, several bags of furs, and some red mineral dye. As for the Kingdom's invincible Lake Gems from the Southern Tribes, Chief Visaka expressed they were unnecessary and preferred exchanging them for a bag of food.

According to the tribal tradition, in the next six months, the Torpan Tribe would cultivate at the rivermouth, planting a season of corn. If the harvest was good, they might establish the Torpan Rivermouth as a stable migration point, returning each spring and moving in autumn.

"Our merchant fleet will regularly trade, bringing you the goods you need."

Priest Zuwalo sincerely said this to Chief Visaka.

"You might consider establishing a village at the rivermouth and settling down. Or at least leave some people behind to maintain the camp's presence."

"The Wilderness always lacks food. In the fall, when we cannot farm, we must expand our search area to find more prey or battle other tribes."

Chief Visaka grasped the Copper Spear tightly and forcefully plunged it half a foot into the earth. Then, he gazed at the clearly sharper Copper Spear, pondered for a moment, and promised.

"Faraway brothers, if you can regularly bring us useful goods and weapons, someone will always remain at this rivermouth camp."

"Even if the tribe migrates, it will only follow this Torpan River to the upstream Wilderness, where more Huichol tribes reside. They too possess more furs, dyes, Jin Shi, Silver Ore, and flash stones. The tribe will try to bring back as much as possible for trade with you."

The so-called flash stones consist of cassiterite and stannite, associated with sphalerite, present in hydrothermal vein-type deposits. These Tin Ore stones are plentiful in the Huichol lands, just like the Silver Ore stones scattered northwest of Sakatekas and the not-so-rare Gold stones. However, while there are Tin Ore stones here, there is no copper. The Red Crow Tribe discovered Copper Mountain but found no tin.

The three thousand li Wilderness of the Northern Land is extremely barren, with scarce rivers and rainfall but rich mineral resources distributed unevenly. Interactions between tribes often involve conflict, making large-scale trade challenging and mineral development impossible. The deeper into the Wilderness, the more barbaric and savage the migrating tribes become.

As a result, the Huichol tribes only use these mineral stones for grinding into dyes or as decorations. They are isolated from other tribes, with no City-State established nearby, and haven't learned smelting. Or perhaps they once learned, but migration in the fuel-scarce Wilderness led to its forgetfulness.

"In the depths of the Wilderness, the Huichol tribes, speaking ancient Aztec, lie between mountains in the world's northwest..."

Priest Zuwalo pursed his lips, observing Chief Visaka's honest eyes and the bold tattoos, feeling the Wilderness warriors' fierceness and killing intent. Many thoughts surged in the new Priest's mind. After a while, he nodded and made a farewell agreement with Chief Visaka.

"Chief Divine as witness! Brothers of the mountain Torpan Tribe, I will leave ten crew members stationed here. They will assist you in farming and help build the camp. Upon returning to the Kingdom and repairing the ship... in two or three months, we will head north again and surely reunite before autumn harvest."

"Good! All Gods watch from the red skies, observing the earthly agreement. We will meet again with the ship's tribe, trade again as friends and brothers!"

Chief Visaka nodded in agreement. He had fewer thoughts than the other side and did not fear the ship's tribe remaining. Even if a threat is encountered at the seaside in the future, it's merely a long migration, just a few hundred li ahead. However, now, such trade, beneficial for the tribe's continuation, needs to be grasped tightly, worth doing!

The sun rose and set, marking another day. The merchant fleet sailed into the sea, and the rivermouth returned to calm. Moving south to north, past the Southern Ticos' Zongshi Town and the Northern Ticos' Three Rivers City, the Torpan Rivermouth, where Huichol people migrate, was the third node of the northward route.

Continuing north, the fourth node is Fish Mountain Village of the Totomei people, where food and fresh water can be replenished. Small-scale trade of Jin Shi is possible. When the merchant fleet returned, they also left a dozen crew stationed here. Another six to seven hundred li northwest is the fifth node, the Yoreim Tribe of the Mayo people.

Priest Zuwalo sat at the ship's bow, remembering his experiences at the Yoreim Tribe, and couldn't help but smile.

During the Kingdom's first exploration, a Prepecha Warrior named Gray Cat Putu was left with the Yoreim Tribe. Last month, seeing the Kingdom's merchant fleet arrive, Gray Cat Putu was overwhelmed with emotion, even tears welled up in his eyes.

"Chief Divine's blessing! You have finally arrived! Honorable Priest Zuwalo, I beg you to take me away. I can't endure such days any longer!..."

Upon their reunion, Gray Cat was visibly thinner and had a more weathered face. As the exchanged tribal warrior, his most important task was to breed, improving the bloodlines within the Yoreim Tribe through marriages. In daily life, he was constantly entangled by the tribe's women, with little time to rest. In less than a year, he already had four confirmed children, and perhaps many more uncertain...

Putu's request was naturally rejected by Priest Zuwalo. The Kingdom needed familiar envoys of the Northern Land to reside among the northern tribes. He conversed with the diligent Prepecha Warrior for a while, learned more about the Yoreim Great Tribe's situation, and then laughed heartily as he watched Putu get dragged off by several robust women.

Then came a secret talk between the Kingdom's newly appointed Priest, merchant fleet captain Zuwalo, and Chieftain Kalan of the Yoreim Great Tribe.

"Ancestor as witness! Friends from the sea, your weapons are very useful, very good! We need more. Hmm, Jin Shi, Silver Ore, Copper Ore, Firestone, all can be exchanged, all are acceptable."

Chieftain Kalan wore his signature deer head with a sincere smile on his face. From Gray Cat Putu, he had long learned of the Southern Great Tribes' might and thus was increasingly amiable.

"Chief Divine as witness! Sacred will guided our meeting, a reunion of brothers. This distant sea route links us together, bringing light and prosperity!"

Priest Zuwalo spoke sincerely, conversing equally with Chieftain Kalan.

"Respected Chieftain Kalan, your Copper Ore is excellent, and the Jin Shi is good, both of very high quality. Once I return to the Kingdom and repair the ships...in two or three months, we will return to the North, and certainly, meet again before the autumn harvest."

"Ah! All Gods in the red sky are watching the promise on the ground. We will meet again with the tribe on the ship and trade again as friends and brothers!"

Chief Visaka nodded, agreeing. He wasn't as contemplative as his counterpart, and didn't fear the stay of the ship's tribe. Even if a threat were to arise by the seaside, it would only be a long migration, perhaps a few hundred miles on. But for now, this trade that benefits the tribe's continuity is something worth holding onto and doing!

The sun rises and falls, ushering in another day. The merchant fleet sails into the sea, and the rivermouth returns to calm. From south to north, passing the Southern Tekos' Brown Town and Northern Tekos' Three Rivers City, the Huichol's migrating Torpan rivermouth becomes the third node of the northern route.

Continuing northward, the fourth node is Fish Mountain Village of the Totome people, where provisions and fresh water can be replenished, and small-scale trades for Jin Shi can occur. When the merchant fleet reaches the Yoreim Tribe in the north, they can exchange goods. Zuwaro Priest sits at the bow of the boat, thinking of memories with the Yoreim Tribe, and a smile spreads across his face, watching Putu being dragged away by several strong women.

"The Ancestor bears witness! Friends coming from across the sea, your weapons are very practical, very good! We appreciate your friendship and would like to benefit from it," the Chieftain said with a grin.

"Chief Divine as witness! I will leave ten sailors here to help you with cultivation and camp construction. We will return to the Kingdom, repair the ships...two or three months later, we will head north again, and we will definitely meet again before the autumn harvest."

"What a bold proposal! It is related to the Yomei Great Tribe of the North..."

Évoque Zuwaro, sitting at the ship's prow, envisioned the sights from the Yoreim Tribe and felt his thoughts surge. He had spent many sleepless nights pondering. Finally, after what seemed like an

eternity, he nodded, setting an agreement with the Chief Divine of the Yoreim Tribe before parting ways with Viisaga, the Chieftain.

"Our Envoy shall guide the worthy of the Wilderness back to the Kingdom, to witness the power of the Chief Divine." Zuwalo said solemnly, clutching a heavy long spear tightly.

Chieftain smiled again, agreeing without much thought. Though he wasn't as contemplative as the other, he recognized trading which favored the tribe's continuity was always worth capturing!

The sun rose and set, marking another passing day. The merchant fleet sailed into the horizon, leaving the rivermouth in restored calm. Moving from the South to the Northern Ticos' Three Rivers City, through Sakate, and finally to the Torpan River, was the third point on the northward route of migration.

As the journey continued north, the fourth node was Fish Mountain Village of the Totome people, where supplies of food and freshwater could be replenished. The fleet could engage in minor trades involving Jin Shi. Sitting at the bow of the ship, Zuwalo recalled his experiences with the Yoreim Tribe, a smile slowly spreading across his face as he watched Puto being dragged away by several strong women.

Then it was the turn of Chief Divine witness Zuwaro, to whom Zuwalo said, "Honorable Chief Kalan, your copper ore is excellent, and the Jin Shi is of good quality - both are very high grade. When we return to the Kingdom and repair the ship, we will surely come north again two to three months before the autumn harvest, and we can further establish our connections. As the Chief Divine watches over us, we who come from across the sea will return to meet again and trade as friends and brothers!"

Chieftain Visaka, nodding his head, agreed. He was not overly concerned about the stay of the ship's tribe. Even if a threat were to arise by the seaside in the future, it would only necessitate a lengthy migration of perhaps hundreds of miles. But for now, this trade opportunity that benefits the continuation of the tribes is worth seizing!

Chapter 1116: Establishment of the Northern Trade Route, a Journey of Tenfold Profits

Dark clouds gathered, the sky was dim, and the seaside weather was unpredictable, in an instant it looked like drizzle was coming. The Zuwaro Priest looked up, gazed at the darkening sky, put on a wide-brimmed straw hat, and covered the expression on his face.

"Yoreim Tribe Chieftain Kalan's proposal... Yomei Great Tribe..."

Recalling the conversation of that day, the Zuwaro Priest touched his chin, pondering for a long time, but still shook his head.

"The Yaji people's Yomei Tribe controls nearly a thousand people, possessing three thousand warriors in the Northern Land Great Tribe. If there isn't enough supply along the route, how many Samurais can the kingdom's fleet carry three to four thousand miles away?... Such a bold proposal should be left for Your Majesty to decide!"

Thinking of this, the newly appointed priest let his thoughts wander, remembering the insights of the Yomei Great Tribe.

The Yomei Tribe, relying on the Great River upstream in the East, engaged in prosperous trade with the Oorta City-State further north in the mountains, and the Makuvi factions at the edge of the wilderness. The ancestral land of the Oorta City-State Alliance is Copper Mountain, producing a large amount of high-quality copper materials and tools. The Yaji people factions, especially the Yomei Tribe, control various Firestone coal mines, producing ample amounts of smoke coal.

It is because of the open-pit coal mines and the barrier of northern mountains that the Yomei Tribe doesn't need to migrate when the cold snap arrives, allowing them to gradually grow to a scale of ten thousand people. And the riverside seaside plain where they reside has become fertile land that various tribes covet. Even the usually friendly Guaiima Tribe harbors some envy, let alone the related Yoreim Tribe.

"The fleet conducted gemstone trade at the Yomei Tribe, loading over ten twin-hulled canoes with coal, totaling about several dozen tons. The Black Rock Mountain iron mine specifically wants this premium Northern Land coal, claiming that when traditionally refined, the resulting iron doesn't become brittle..."

The Zuwaro Priest tugged at his hair, pondering silently. Coal, iron... He studied Your Majesty's Divine Revelation at Divine Power University but was completely clueless about the specifics of smelting.

"The essence of divinity infused in the earth's minerals, the more infused, the purer it becomes, the higher the quality, and the easier to smelt. Gold, silver, copper, coal, iron, and tin are all alike, differing by highland quality."

Thinking about this, Zuwaro slightly tilted his head, glancing at the twin-hulled boats transporting coal beside him. For trade convenience, these twin-hulled boats have planks laid between them that can hold people and goods, with additional extended rafts on both sides providing buoyancy and transport.

At this moment, both the planks for cargo and the auxiliary rafts were loaded with basketfuls of coal, pressing the boat hulls half into the water. Through such modifications, the maximum load of a twin-hulled boat increased to seven or eight tons. The only downside was its lack of agility, making it unsuitable for water combat.

"So, the Yomei Great Tribe is the furthest north that the merchant fleet reaches. The warlike Sri people further north don't have special products for trade and are too dangerous. The fleet turns west at the Yomei Tribe, going to the long peninsula on the west to excavate the Bird Guano Stone designated by Your Majesty on small islands along the coast."

The Zuwaro Priest slightly turned, looking to the other side beside him. Baskets of varying sizes were filled with grayish-yellow Bird Guano Stone.

According to the Divine Revelation, these Bird Guano Stones were formed over countless years by the droppings of sea island bird flocks, containing vitality for cultivating crops. Within the entire fleet of over twenty twin-hulled boats, more than half of the load was used to carry this natural fertilizer.

"If a ton of Bird Guano Stone were ground and supplemented into farmland, how much food could it ultimately produce?"

The Zuwaro Priest widened his eyes, staring at the ordinary Bird Guano Stone, unable to discern anything. But he knew, from upstream of Lake Ato, a small lake had been drawn out to build floating fields on the water, the Chinampa. This is technology unique to the Mexica Alliance, allowing year-round farming and harvests of over three times, relying on ample fertilizer to sustain.

"Around the long peninsula, the islands are full of freely soaring seabirds, numbering in the hundreds of thousands. They incessantly produce fertilizer..."

The Zuwaro Priest squinted his eyes, recalling the overwhelming seabirds, the soul-stirring bird calls, and the "raindrops" falling from the sky, unable to help but wipe his forehead. He envisioned the splendid scenery and the ever-present Bird Guano Stone, a yearning rising in his eyes.



"Such Bird Guano Stones piled into mountains, stretching into land, who knows how many millions of tons are there! If Bird Guano Stone can indeed increase yields, then the kingdom's food would be... Ah! Chief Divine's blessing!"

The Zuwaro Priest took a deep breath, his face reverently low as he prayed.

The kingdom's merchant fleet traveled along the long peninsula southward, encountering numerous Bird Guano Stone islands all the way to the peninsula's southernmost point. But the fleet wouldn't reach the southernmost edge due to the lack of large villages for replenishment along the route. The Kochimi factions on the peninsula have always been small in scale, the largest numbering only a few hundred people, and spare food has always been scarce. After traveling south for six hundred miles, the merchant fleet replenished food and water at the Kochimi's largest fishing village, Chimi Village (today's Tripuí). Outside the village, there was an almost enclosed lagoon (today's Puerto Escondido), abundant with fish, thus able to support a large village.

Heading east for three to four hundred miles from Chimi Village, they returned again to the Northern Continent, right at the location of the Yoreim Great Tribe. The kingdom's merchant fleet resupplied once more at the Yoreim Great Tribe, bid farewell to the yearning gray cat Putu wanting to escape misery, and embarked on the southward return journey along the same route.

"This is the complete northern trade route! Starting from Trout Town at the Talsas River Mouth, passing sequentially through the Southern Ticos' Brown Sturdy Town, the Northern Ticos' Three Rivers City, the Huichol people's Torpan River Mouth, the Totome people's Fish Mountain Village, the Mayo people's Yoreim Tribe, the Yaji people's Yomei Tribe, then heading west through the Bird Guano Stone islands, reaching the Kochimi people's Chimi Village, and then returning east to the Yoreim Tribe."

The Zuwaro Priest closed his eyes, summarizing in his mind. These navigation nodes, distances of 500-700 miles, make convenient replenishment spots. One coastal journey fits neatly into four thousand miles outbound and four thousand miles returning, taking approximately four months.

Along the way, from south to north, the Ticos people's Brown Sturdy Town and Three Rivers City produce food and cloth, exchanging for the kingdom's gemstones. The Huichol people at Torpan River Mouth have the ability to provide tin ore, Jin Shi, and Silver Ore, but they don't accept gemstones, only cloth and weapons.

The Totome people's Fish Mountain Village is quite sufficient in food, favoring daily product trade, showing little interest in gemstones. The Mayo people's Yoreim Tribe especially prefers Bronze Weapons and refined leather armor, able to provide high-quality copper ore, Jin Shi, and Silver Ore.

The Yaji people's Yomei Tribe produces a lot of smoke coal, copper ore, Jin Shi, accepting gemstone trade. Within the Yomei Tribe, there are merchants from the Oorta City-State Alliance who can provide high-purity red copper to trade for Bronze Weapons. The mountain-based Oorta Alliance is facing plundering aggression from the fierce Apache Alliance on the plains, having an almost limitless demand for weapons and leather armor.

"The price for exchanging red copper from the Oorta is only one-third of the Alliance. The coal from the Yomei Tribe is just human labor cost. While weapons, leather armor, and cloth within the Northern Continent's tribes can command a markup of several times. As for the gold ore that every tribe has, it's usually worth four to five parts of the Alliance's value, sometimes even a basket of Jin Shi for a basket of cotton cloth..."

The Zuvaro Priest calculated slightly, and his eyes subtly turned red. The profit from this northern trade route is at least six times! The kingdom's merchant fleet going north with weapons, leather armor, and cloth, then fully loaded with gold, silver, copper, coal, tin, and Bird Guano Stone heading south...

"Oh no, wait! If they carry Lake Gem northward, exchanging for abundant cotton cloth on the lands of the Southern and Northern Ticos... this trade route's profit is exactly tenfold! Praise the Chief Divine!"

Thinking of this, Zuvaro showed exhilaration, his lips smiling with reverence. He excitedly rubbed his palms and loosened his wrists, with eyes gleaming.

"Your Majesty said that thirty percent of income from each transaction would be shared among the fleet's crew! After making a few trips, the Samurais and sailors on the ship, as well as me, will all be bathed in the Chief Divine's Golden Light! Haha!"

Joyful laughter resounded in the dim sea and sky, sincerely religious yet filled with intense desire. Zuvaro made up his mind that after returning, he would rest for half a month in Zicao County before heading north again with a fully loaded cargo.

The newly appointed priest stood up, positioned at the prow. He gazed at the vast ocean, his heart brimming with thrilling excitement. After a long while, a sudden thought struck, directing his gaze to the distant East.

"The world is so vast, and the tribes are so diverse. After the kingdom's first exploration, the Northern Land remains endless. And now, who knows where the kingdom's exploratory fleet heading east has reached? What exactly are the tribes like in the distant East?"

Chapter 1117: The Second Kingdom Expedition, Raise the Sails!

On the vast sea, a fierce wind gathers dark clouds. Between the clouds and the sea, a petrel flies proudly like black lightning. With sharp eyes, it overlooks the distant ship. Then, the storm sweeps in, swallowing both the petrel and the fleet!

"Oh Chief Divine! The sky was just clear not long ago, why did a storm suddenly arise?! Is it my curse..."

Huitu Puapu, dressed in leather armor, widened his eyes in horror, staring at the black clouds approaching from the horizon. Those clouds gathered in clusters, carrying a roaring sound, seemingly slow yet swiftly approaching. In just a moment, the rolling clouds swallowed the Kingdom's exploration fleet. The sky darkened instantly, and the waves surged violently; even the double-decked longship spun like a toy amidst the waves!

"Chief Divine, bless the fleet! We have been sailing eastward safely for nine days, covering at least over seven hundred miles! The Cuba Snake Island in the East must not be far, right around the fleet. This is the final test; if we survive this storm, we can reach the sacred Land of Prophecy!"

Chief God Priest Tomate, wearing a short robe, raised the emblem of the Chief Divine, staggering and loudly encouraging the crew. Though he had never seen such a severe storm, his devout faith gave him a fearless heart and courage to face death.

"Praise the Chief Divine! He will grant us holy blessings to overcome this obstructing storm!"

"Boom! Boom!"

Thunder roared in the sky, tearing through the dull heavens, illuminating the turbulent sea. Tall shadows like walls appeared nearby, suddenly rushing toward the swaying fleet.

"Oh Chief Divine! Cloud Serpent Divine! Ahh..."

Apprentice Dark Snake grabbed the rope and screamed in terror. An eight or nine-meter-high wave crashed directly toward him. With a "splash," the wave swept over the bow, engulfing Dark Snake's thin frame, and then "bang," smashing against the ship's side. Dark Snake immediately blacked out, his hands weakly releasing the rope, flailing like seaweed.

"Splash! Splash!"

After the fierce wave passed, Dark Snake lay flat on the deck, spitting bubbles. Beside him was Didi, similarly dizzy. Didi barely lifted his head and looked around, discovering the crew scattered everywhere, seemingly missing some familiar figures.

"Phooey! Such a big wave, such a big wind, and such a big thunder!"

Sailor Didi shook his head, spitting sea water that had flooded his mouth, salty and choked, making him very uncomfortable. He looked up at the vast clouds, seeing the dim daylight, his heart filled with fear. But amid the fear, he touched his tattooed forehead, gaining a devout conviction.

"Oh, no. The Chief Divine is the biggest! He will shine upon us, like the sun in the sky!"

However, it seemed the Chief Divine did not hear Didi's prayer. On the nearby sea, again another wave was gathering, rising like a hill growing from the sea, about to sweep in!

"Boom! Boom!"

Lightning and thunder, deafening roars carrying piercing white light, became music in the storm. Sailor Didi glanced at the horizon and gasped in shock.

"Hiss! Another big wall!"

Didi hurriedly tied two more loops with the rope around him. Then, he finally saw Dark Snake lying flat, surprising him. After a slight hesitation, he grabbed the rope and tied Dark Snake to his side.

"Chief Divine bless us! Hold on! Holding till the end is the victory of light!... Cough cough!"

Chief God Priest Tomate's shouts floated faintly on the ship, remaining resolute and fearless. Huitu Puapu leaned against the mast, tying himself and the bow of the mast together. It looked quite determined, like sacrifices.

As for the other Samurai and sailors, most of them looked ashen-faced, terrified, trying hard to secure themselves on the longship. Low prayers rose on the ship, like the only hope for everyone.

Didi looked around but did not see Old Man Chiwaco, suddenly feeling anxious. The previous wave was so big, could the captain, the old man, have been swept away by the waves?... Thinking this, Didi's nose stung, and holding Dark Snake, he cried bitterly.

"Wuwuwu! Dark Snake, the old man, is gone!..."

"Splash! Splash!"

The surging sea tides rolled in once more, making the longship sway and spin half a circle. Under the flagship's cabin, there was suddenly a "bang bang!"

"Hiss! Tikalo, your bald head, is really both bald and hard!"

Old militia Chiwaco clutched his head, glaring at Tikalo at the ship's bottom. Tikalo looked pale, just about to speak, but vomited with a "wow."

"Cough cough! God... Ah..."

"Damned old heaven! How long will this storm last? How far are we from Cuba Snake Island?!"

Chiwaco grabbed Maya merchant Tikalo with one hand and Kuba, the Cuban guide, with the other. He glared at the frightened Kuba, asking harshly, then turned to Tikalo.

"Quick! Translate for me!"

Tikalo struggled to speak, exchanged a few words with Kuba, and then turned around and replied reluctantly.

"The storm on this sea is quite impermanent. This suddenly appearing storm must have been brought by a hurricane. Maybe it will stop the next moment and move away. Or it might last four or five days before dissipating..."

"Hiss! Four or five days? No, how can the fleet keep holding for four or five more days! We've never encountered such a big storm in our previous explorations!"

Chiwaco turned pale, his feet swaying. He gritted his teeth, his expression revealed urgency, asking again.

"Exactly how far are we from Cuba Snake Island?"

Tikalo asked aloud. After a moment, he hesitated, awkwardly answering.

"Kuba says, according to the days of sailing, we should have already reached Cuba!"

"What!"

Chiwaco angrily jumped up, then "bang," hit the deck overhead. He held his head, muttering curses.

"Arrived at Cuba? You can't see even a hint of land anywhere around..."

"When the storm rises, you can't see far. Kuba says our position must be near Cuba..."

"Damn! Right nearby? This blind fool..."

Chiwaco released the two, leaving them ignored in the cabin. He turned and climbed up to the deck, seeing high waves pressing from above.

"Ah! Blind Your Majesty..."

"Splash! Splash!"

"Phooey! Phoo phoo..."

After a long time, Chiwaco crawled up from the deck, spitting out full mouthfuls of saltwater. He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, shaking his head hard, binding himself with ropes. Then, his legs wobbled as he staggered to find Nautical Priest MeKate.

"MeKate, where is the current wind heading?"

"Cough cough! Respected Chiwaco Captain..."

MeKate, looking wretchedly soaked, holding a compass, huddled in the corner of the longship. He stretched out his finger, dipped it in rainwater, felt for a while, and then uncertainly responded.

"Seems it's heading east, south...and sometimes west, north..."

"Wind east south, sometimes west north...ship swaying left, right, unmoving..."

Chiwaco stared, thinking for a while. Then, he looked at the swaying, aimlessly drifting longship, gritting his teeth, asking.

"MeKate, where is our ship's bow pointing?"

"Uh...just now it was southeast, now it seems northwest again..."

Chiwaco's eyes sharpened, looking at the surrounding sea. Vaguely, he saw several other longships, their bows differed but not too far off.

"Damn it! The fleet never moved, didn't advance, just spinning in the storm..."

"Uh! Respected Chiwaco Captain, such a sudden storm, the crew has never encountered before, hard to row at this moment..."

"Hoist the sails at the bow and stern! Letting the wind lead us forward!"

Old militia Chiwaco bit his lip, decisively shouting the order. His eyes revealed once again a desperate decision, like the night the capital city broke.

"Hoist the sails! Whatever it takes, we must not stay here!"

"Hoist the sails! Chief Divine covers the fleet, steering the bow east!"

Chapter 1118: The Second Kingdom Expedition, Arrival! The Long Feather of the Feathered Serpent Divine

The gale howled, like the roar of divines in the sky. Waves surged, like giants rising from the sea. Under the dark and deep sky, seven longships of the Kingdom's exploration fleet struggled in the turbulent and profound sea like straws swept away by the torrent. The fleet drifted with the waves, spinning uncontrollably. Until signals from the flagship raised the sails at both the bow and stern, the howling gale extended its hands, pulling apart the bow-like sea surface, launching the tiny longships!



"Chief Divine! Ah!..."

Huitu Puapu clung tightly to the mast, feeling the speed of the ship like wind and lightning, and screamed in terror. The gale blew away his Eagle Helmet, and the tide soaked through his Leather Armor. Even his feet were about to be lifted off the deck by the fast-moving longship.

"Ah! Divine Eagle! This is the curse of the remnants of the Divine Eagle, wanting me to fly like an eagle and then crash into the sea..."

Huitu was shouting hysterically, yet the raised sail was fully inflated and hit something. Moments later, a storm petrel collided with the sail and fell from the mast top, landing straight on Huitu's head.

"Thud!"

"Divine... Ah..."

Huitu's vision went black, his head muddled, but his hands still clung to the mast. Waves of wind and rain struck continuously, and the tides occasionally tilted the longship. Chief God Priest Tomate, bound to the gunwale, still held his head high, fearlessly shouting into the storm, inspiring all the sailors.

"Chief Divine protects us! He shields us against the impediments of the Evil God! We will definitely, definitely pass through the storm and waves, and reach the fertile land of Divine Revelation..."

"MeKate!"

"Captain, just steer a bit to the left. Good, now a bit to the right..."

Old Militia Chiwaco stood at the stern, struggling to control the rudder, trying to keep the bow facing the East. He didn't know where the fleet would be blown by the gale, but could only let fate lead the way. Yet deep down, he was certain that as long as they got through the storm's heart, the fleet would surely survive!

"Oh unpredictable fate... May you be more reliable than the divines..."

The old militia muttered under his breath, standing at the stern, bound with ropes. The longship swayed, and he stumbled, but never fell.

The clouds hung low, the waves were capricious, and the gale grew fiercer. The Kingdom Fleet was carried by the gale, moving forward like spinning arrows without knowing how long they'd gone. Old Militia Chiwaco gritted his teeth, relying on stubborn strength, refusing to yield, standing firmly on the ship despite his knees weakening.

The ship sped swiftly, the flagship's bow being pulled by the wind, repeatedly lifting up and pressed down by the waves. Amidst this rhythmic swaying, a stunned storm petrel slid toward the stern, ending under Chiwaco's feet.

"Uh? This stunned sea bird?... Is it an omen?..."

Chiwaco stared, looking at the fallen bird in the storm, a sense of foreboding rising in his heart. But soon, he realized and his eyes lit up with delight.

"No, that's not it! With sea birds appearing, we should be at the edge of land! Cavado, the storm has weakened. Carefully climb the mast and look around!"

"Yes, Captain!"

Upon hearing, Mountain Bird Cavado, soaking wet like pulled from the water, climbed the deck. He nervously hugged the slippery mast, grasped the extending ropes, and climbed several meters high. After observing for a while, he shook his head and shouted.

"Captain, it's too dark! Can't see anything! It's all pitch black in the distance..."

"Alright... Come down!..."

"Bang!"

A delayed lightning streaked across the dull sky, illuminating the path ahead. Mountain Bird Cavado suddenly trembled. He reached out, excitedly pointing forward, shouting at the top of his lungs.

"Land! Captain, suddenly there's land ahead! It's a shoal! No, it's a small island, no wait, it's a chain of small islands!... Ah, a long chain of islands, right in front, so close! ...Oh no! We're going to crash... about to crash..."

"Boom! Thud thud!"

Violent crashing sounds suddenly erupted at the ship's bottom! The entire longship shook violently, rushing onto the shore, abruptly reducing from over a dozen meters per second to zero. Old Militia Chiwaco staggered, finally couldn't stand, and fell toward the bow. Mountain Bird Cavado screamed, falling from several meters high mast. Luckily, the rope on him entangled his legs, hanging him at the mast's tail, barely brushing by the God of Death. As for the crew, they all tumbled in the fierce collision. As for Tikalo in the cabin, he was thrown multiple times, his head swelling from the bumps.

"Chief Divine bless us! He has guided us to the Land of Prophecy!"

After a while, Chief God Priest Tomate was the first to stand. He raised the Sun Amulet high, walked to the bow, gazing at the longship beached on the sand. The sand was gray-white like bones, desolate. At the tidal edge, no traces of human creation could be seen.

Then he looked around, an arid and narrow small island appeared before his eyes. This small island seemed only two or three miles around, with visible boundaries at a glance. On the sides of the sea, more scattered islands formed a long extending chain. From afar, this island chain looked like a fishing line drawn from the sea, stretching from the Northwest sky to the Southeast horizon, with no end in sight, its length unknown. The Kingdom's longship was blocked by this long string-like island chain, stranded on the barren beach.

"Uh... is this the fertile soil, Cuba?"

Priest Tomate rubbed his head, uncertain. The storm had weakened, the sky brightened a bit. He surveyed the surroundings, carefully observing the wild forest on the small island, still seeing no signs of human activity.

"Kuba, where is this?"

Chiwaco's face was pale, pulling the Mayan merchant Tikalo with one hand and the guide Kuba with the other, walking to the gunwale. Tikalo's face was paler than Chiwaco's, almost like crushed bone powder. He held back the tumultuous nausea in his stomach, leaning against Kuba, asked softly.

Kuba stood by the ship, dazed, gazing at the sky dim yet bright, looking at the vast endless blue sea, and the scattered extending island chain. He sniffed the fresh sea breeze forcefully, like wanting to smell the ancestral homeland in the wind. The crowd gathered around him, held their breaths, not disturbing the guide's memories.

"A long island chain, I recognize it... This is, here is..."

Kuba's face gradually lit up, like a dull board painted with bright colors. These colors were inscribed deep within him, marking the ancestral imprint. Kuba's mouth gradually curled up, eyes moist. Almost laughing, almost crying, wanting to shout but unsure what to shout...

After a while, this Guanahatabey guide, for the first time in Tikalo's presence, straightened his back. He extended his hand, pointed at the islands to the Southeast, softly said.

"This is the Feathered Serpent's Long Feather, falling on the island chain in the sea. And not far to the East, is the scaled Great Island, the scales and flesh of the Serpent divine."

Then Kuba turned around, pointing at the islands' Northwest, gazing at the brightening sea sky, with a sparkle in his eyes, his voice turning excited.

"There, at the end of the Long Feather... is the tail of the Feathered Serpent divine, the mountain ranges by the sea to the West, where the ancestral Tribes are! The end of this island chain is the fertile soil, Snake Island Cuba!"

## Chapter 1119: The Second Kingdom Expedition, The First Night in Cuba

In May, the Caribbean Sea was like a capricious wild god, casually revealing its wild side. Gale winds howling across the sky; dark clouds piling up, pressing down on the sea; thunderclaps blasting, falling amongst the ships; the waves rising as if they were mountains! This all-encompassing storm was the wild god's free dance, never caring about the life and death or survival of mortals.

However, when the Supreme Main God displayed its majesty and extended an invisible hand to take away the gloomy cover of the sky, the wild god bowed its head in recognition of its mistake. The all-encompassing storm dissipated in an instant! In just a few quarters, the brilliant sunlight descended from the azure sky, reflecting sparkling waves on the calm sea and illuminating the colorful shells on the beach.

"Ah, this damned old sky, really blind! Just a moment ago it was pitch black, like the abyss underground, and now it opens up bright and clear, making it seem like a Divine Kingdom... Ha! This is treating the fleet as toys, tossing them around in the sea for fun, you really are blind!..."

Old Militia Chiwaco widened his eyes, watching the clouds disperse and a clear sky emerge, unable to close his mouth in shock. Moments later, he looked up at the sky and cursed loudly, venting the fear accumulated for a long time during the terrifying storm.

"You blind fool! You bastard! Tossing us back and forth! You've worn out all my anger and strength! You really are blind!..."

"Ah! Praise the Chief Divine, He watches over us and we have endured His test! He generously bestows light upon us, guiding us, witnessing the glory of Divine Revelation!"

A dozen steps away, Chief God Priest Tomate knelt on the ground, kissing the Sun Amulet in his hands. A few breaths later, he lifted his head, closed his eyes, and prayed to the sun in the sky, tears of excitement welling up.

Not far behind Priest Tomate, a group of praying Samurai and sailors also knelt. Huitu Puap was kneeling at the front, utterly exhausted, half-collapsed on the sand like corn pecked by birds. After a long while, he lowered his head, closing his eyes while silently praying with devotion.

"Chief Divine, protect me, allowing me to survive the wicked storm! Three Gods shield me, setting me free from the final resentment of the Divine Eagle! Old Prophet, save me, provide a way to dispel the curse, escape the destined-to-die abyss! Ah! I, Huitu Puap, am truly a good person blessed by the gods!"

"...Whew, praise you, Chief Divine! Please forgive me, allow me to return home safely..."

Seeing everyone praying, old Militia Chiwaco sighed, halted his cursing, and uttered a prayer himself. Around the longship, guide Kuba lay on the ground, kissing the solid homeland beneath him. Meanwhile, Mayan merchant Tikalo, his face pale, closed his eyes, continuously reminiscing about the memories of his first sea voyage. As for Dark Snake and Didi, they lay wearily at the stern of the ship, dipping their fingers into a jar of honey, then sucking their fingers while blankly gazing at the sun.

After a long while, everyone in the fleet vented their feelings in different ways. Only then did they calm down and began tallying the losses of the fleet.

"We still have one, two, three, four...four ships. Each ship originally had more than sixty people, but now there's about a tenth fewer. Altogether, the fleet has about two hundred and twenty people remaining!"

Upon hearing Priest Mekate's tally result, old Militia Chiwaco took a deep breath, feeling a headache.

"Only four ships left, and two hundred and twenty people?"

Eight days ago, when the exploration fleet set off from Ekab Port, there were seven longships and more than four hundred and twenty people in the grand team. During the first seven days of sailing, they sailed eastward smoothly. Until today, when a sudden storm swept over, almost devouring the entire fleet within just half a day's time!

Mayan merchant Tikalo stood beside, waiting alongside Kuba for Chiwaco's inquiry. He touched his divinely long bald head, pondered slightly, then sincerely spoke to comfort him.

"Respected Captain Chiwaco! The storm just now mostly blew a west wind almost the entire time. As long as the fleet hoists the sails and uses the wind to travel east, they won't be lost at sea. After all, to the east of our fleet, there's not only the nearby Scale Great Island but also the Cuba Snake Island

stretching over two thousand miles! The three longships that got lost will surely be intercepted by Cuba Snake Island and stranded somewhere... Chief Divine bless the fleet!"

"Yes. Chief Divine bless them!"

Old Militia Chiwaco pursed his lips, with a serious expression, nodded. He thought for a while before looking at Mekate, softly asking.

"How much food is left on board?...Shh! Keep it down, don't let the crew hear just yet."

"Captain, the waves were large during the storm, parts of the supplies on the ships were lost, and others were soaked by the tide... Hmm, the food that can be eaten now can only last four to five days."

Priest Mekate lowered his voice and answered cautiously. Hearing this, Chiwaco furrowed his brow, thought for a moment, and then looked towards Tikalo and Kuba beside him.

"You say, what's to the east of this barren island, what Scale Great Island is it? Are there any tribes or villages on the island, can we trade for some food?"

"Yes, Scale Great Island! Kuba says this barren island is oriented north to south, and we should be in the southeastern part of the island chain. Scale Great Island is just not far to the east, at the nearest twenty or thirty miles, no more than a hundred miles away at the farthest. And from Scale Island heading north, if you go no more than two hundred miles, you'll surely reach Cuba Snake Island."

Mayan merchant Tikalo sincerely relayed the guide's words.

"Actually, Scale Great Island is transformed from the scales of the Feathered Serpent Divine, each side connected to a tail feather of the Feathered Serpent Divine. The island chain beneath our feet is the western tail feather submerged in water. And to the east of Scale Great Island, there is another island chain of the east tail feather. The two island chains created by the tail feathers, plus the great island transformed from a scale, precisely cradle the tail of the Feathered Serpent Divine, connecting to the two western ends of Cuba Snake Island... In other words, the island chain beneath our feet is part of the extension of Cuba Snake Island!"

## Chapter 1120: The Second Kingdom Expedition, Cuba's First Night

"As for the Great Island of Scales, Kuba said there are some Taino villages where thousands of tribespeople live scattered around. The Taino people are an extremely kind and gentle tribe that never initiates attacks on outsiders. They will be delighted to help us, trade food with us, and even assist us in repairing the ship..."

Upon hearing this, Chiwaco raised an eyebrow, somewhat skeptical. He had come from the Mexican Plateau, ventured into the Wilderness of the Northern Land, and traveled through the Maya of the East. All the tribes along the way had nothing to do with "kind" or "gentle." For the Taino people described by Kuba, the old militia still retained some caution in his heart. But regardless, they had to go to the nearest Taino village to replenish their food supply as soon as possible.

"Inspect the ships, organize the supplies, and dry the damp food! Mountain Bird, how is the condition of the ships? Is the damage severe?"

"Captain, of the four longships beached, two are intact. One is slightly damaged, and the other has a hole! However, we have repair planks on board."

"Chief Divine bless us! Alright, first select a dozen people to light a fire and cook the meal, so everyone can have a full meal tonight! Then, all crew members are divided into two teams. Those without strength, stay on the small island to repair the damaged ships. The others with more energy, prepare the two intact longships!"

Chiwaco pondered a bit, consulted with Priest Tomato, and quickly made a decision.

"Tomorrow morning, the second team will set out with me. We will head to the Eastern Great Island of Scales to visit the Taino villages! As for the first team, follow Priest Tomato's arrangements... Praise the Chief Divine! Protect the fleet!"

Chief God Priest Tomato decided to stay behind to comfort the crew on the island, repair the ships, and organize the supplies. His role in boosting morale was irreplaceable. Huitu Puapu put on armor and weapons, leading dozens of warriors with the old militia's team to guard against possible conflicts. Meanwhile, Mayan merchant Tikalo finally received permission not to stay in the cabin. Tikalo would join guide Kuba in the initial exploration and also act as a translator.



Hearing this, the pale face of the Mayan merchant lit up with an excited smile, even wiping away tears. The hot, stuffy cabin with its unpleasant smell of salted fish was not a place for humans, it was like the underground dungeon of Mayapan! In his whole life, he had never stayed so long in such a harsh place as a prisoner!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Protect the fleet!"

Upon receiving their orders, the crowd dispersed and busied themselves until dusk.

At dusk, the sky was filled with sunset hues. The sun dyed the sea red, and the vast sea shimmered with colors. Finally, curling smoke from cooking fires rose on the tidal flats.

The old militia Chiwaco chewed on a hot corn cake, sitting with the Dark Snake and Didi by a seaside bonfire. He watched the gradually tranquilizing sea, observing the flickering shadows in the fading light until darkness approached, stopping at the edges of the bonfire's glow.

"Cuba's deserted island, evening after the storm... We're roasting cakes on the beach, it's so fragrant..."

A strange sense of tranquility suddenly welled up in the old militia's heart. He opened his mouth, wanting to recite some poetry in front of the two youths, but lacking the education, he only managed to say some commonplace words. A seagull perched by his side, pecking at the bits of corn falling from the three of them. Occasionally, it would lift its head, gaze at the dark sky, and let out two clear, ringing cries.

"Oh! Oh!"

The old militia stretched out his hand and patted the little head of the gull, and it stopped its calls. Then, he checked the wounds on the bird's wings. They were all bandaged, but it would take some days for them to heal. The old militia glanced at the bald patch on the gull's body with a smile on his face. The gull rolled its dark eyes, examining the human before it, noting the increasingly sparse hair on the man's head.

"Hey! You stupid bird that fell unconscious from the sky! I was going to pluck your feathers and roast you over the fire! But just when I grabbed a tuft, you woke up..."

"It's not that I softened, but you reminded me after all, and with no two tael of meat, I let you go. If you squawk again, I'll recognize you, but the roasting fire won't recognize you!..."

Slim Chiwaco muttered softly, not knowing what he was rambling about. The plump gull shook its head, then raised its voice energetically, letting out two more cries.

"Oh! Oh!"

"Hey! Are you still calling?"

Chiwaco raised his old hand, feigning to strike. The gull turned away, wobbling as it sprinted two steps. Seeing this, both Dark Snake and Didi laughed uncontrollably. Before long, Chiwaco couldn't resist, a smile tugging at his lips. They laughed for a while, then the gull shuffled back. Chiwaco shook his head, petting the gull's head as he gazed at the dark sea, softly reciting.

"Beside the bonfire, the sea can't see the light... Three people laughing, a silly bird calling, not too noisy... Oh! This is the first night the fleet reaches Cuba..."

The low murmurs dispersed along the dark edge of the sea, unheard by many and memorized by none. The sound gradually faded, turning into soft snores, then slowly growing louder, like rhythmic drumbeats.

In the rhythmic snores, a chubby gull spread its injured wings, fluttering a few times. It couldn't fly at all, let alone return home. The gull cocked its head, dumbly daydreaming for a while, then squatting and falling asleep again. Until the sky gradually brightened, it was suddenly awakened by the thunderous snores, dazedly moving closer.

The dawn revealed faint light, as the sea awoke from its boundless depth. In the dim sky, there were some birds freely flying! The silly bird tilted its head, watching the birds in the sky, then lowered its head to look at the tidal flats and the sleeping humans below. Then, it puffed out its belly, perched at the source of the snores, and chirped spiritedly twice.

"Oh!... Oh!..."

"Huh? Ah! Storm, Storm's coming?"

The old militia jumped in fright, waking abruptly. He lifted his head, looking at the sunrise over the sea, then glanced at the sentries on the perimeter, hesitating for a moment before mumbling to himself.

"Huh? Oh! It's dawn, time to set out..."

"Oh! Oh!"

"Damn! You silly bird, you disturbed my sweet dream of going home! I'm gonna roast you!..."

"Oh! Oh!"

The bird's call faded, merging into the Western sea. Home was already far beyond five thousand miles away, the return uncertain. And two thousand miles long Snake Island lay underfoot.