

Civilization 1221

Chapter 1221: Evangelization, Colonization, and Assimilation of the North American Continent; Three Outposts on the Western Sea Coast

The sacred conversion ceremony lasted a full two days. Over a dozen Preaching Priests worked day and night to convert the entire Yoreim Great Tribe of more than three thousand people into believers of the Chief Divine.

Soon, wooden carvings of the Chief Divine's emblem were erected in the square at the center of the tribe. And a simple altar was also completed, becoming a place for prayer morning and evening. The Songbird Priest, ambitious, aims to personally establish the first temple of the Chief Divine in this great tribe on the Northern Continent!

With the initial conversion of the Yoreim Tribe completed, several leaders of the Kingdom also gathered in the chieftain's longhouse to discuss the arrangement of the next plan.

Gathered together, everyone acquainted themselves with one another. The Second-Level Divine Revelation Priest, Zuvaro, and Mikki, are the captain and deputy captain of the Kingdom fleet, having decision-making authority over fleet affairs. Songbird, the Second-Level Preaching Priest, is the highest-ranking Preaching Priest in the Kingdom on the Northern Continent, currently holding actual control over the Yoreim Tribe.

Below them, the fleet's Warrior Leader, Fourth-Level Veteran Warrior Chakapu. This is a typical Prepetcha name, meaning "hard stone," also known as "Stonefirm." Finally, there's the merchant fleet leader, an official from Qinchongcan, Kurucha Xi. This is also a Prepetcha name, meaning "big fish," also called "Kuyu."

Among the five, the first three are Kingdom Priests, followed by a warrior representative, and lastly the capital city official. This distribution of positions symbolizes the power structure within the Kingdom. Various Chief God Priests hold the major authority, while the Legion Warrior Leader holds the military power! The official system of the capital city government has just appeared, with little voice in major decision-making.

"Praise the Chief Divine! May He bless the Kingdom and bless us!"

After everyone took their seats, they unanimously offered a prayer. Then, Scholar Mikki, with a serious expression, looked at Songbird the Preaching Priest.

"Songbird Priest, Chieftain Kalan of the Yoreim Great Tribe and the leaders have converted. They once made agreements with the Kingdom's exploration team... How do you plan to handle them?"

"Chieftain Kalan and the leaders..."

Songbird Priest squinted, a flash of intent crossed his mind. He plans to personally oversee the Yoreim Tribe, manage it, and establish a temple and new city. In other words, he intends to completely swallow up this Northern Great Tribe, transforming it into the Kingdom's territory and citizens. Naturally, the existing chieftain and leaders become his obstacles. But hearing Mikki's suggestion...

"Witness of the Chief Divine! Scholar Mikki, these former tribal nobles, leaving them behind remains a hidden danger... We cannot be soft-hearted!"

"Witness of the Chief Divine! Songbird Priest, these tribal noble chiefs, if they stay in the Yoreim Tribe, are indeed a hidden danger. But if they go to the Kingdom and accept guidance from the priests, perhaps they can still contribute to the Kingdom..."

"Oh?"

Songbird Priest pondered for a moment, then nodded slightly. He looked at Kuyu, the leader of the merchant fleet, and spoke with a smile.

"Kuyu, can I entrust this batch of noble chiefs and leaders to you to take them back to the Kingdom?"

"Good! When our merchant fleet finishes digging guano rock, we'll take these dozen or so people back to the Kingdom of the Lake on our return journey. Let them receive comprehensive guidance at the Divine Power University."

Upon hearing this, Kuyu readily agreed. In the upcoming journey, the Kingdom fleet will split into two; twelve longships will continue exploring according to His Majesty's will, while thirty twin-hulled

merchant ships will return filled with guano rock and ores. The number of the exploring fleet will decrease significantly, as tribes further north remain unknown, lacking reliable supply points, unable to support too many people.

"Captain Zuvaro, the merchant fleet will take away two hundred Kingdom crew members. Songbird Priest, I will also need to supplement thirty or forty local sailors from the Yoreim Tribe. Within a month, we will finish digging guano rock. After two months on the return journey, we will bring more ships, personnel, and supplies!"

Upon hearing this, Zuvaro and Songbird exchanged glances and both nodded. With His Majesty's endorsement and priority support, the Kingdom's colonization on the Northern Continent's Western Sea Coast will accelerate significantly. Regardless of the Telascallan people or the Totonac people, once transported here, they can only rely on the Kingdom, becoming loyal citizens of the Kingdom.

The Yoreim Great Tribe, with three thousand people, already has sufficient size and food reserves to absorb more Kingdom immigrants. Only with the arrival of Kingdom immigrants can the Kingdom's rule be further stabilized.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Priest Zuvaro, the Yoreim Great Tribe has just converted, and desperately needs Kingdom warriors and militia for suppression!"

Songbird Priest pondered for a while and then spoke with a smile.

"The Yoreim Tribe has seven to eight hundred tribe warriors, the exploration fleet will take away one hundred people, leaving three hundred Kingdom warriors and militia behind. In this way, along with the original one hundred Kingdom warriors, there will be four hundred reliable troops stationed, steady as the mountains!"

Upon hearing this, Zuvaro remained silent for a moment and nodded. This was expected; the Kingdom must establish outposts, expand them, and station sufficient military power to operate along the Western Sea Coast. The large fleet of twelve hundred men heading north, with at least half of them staying at various settlements for garrison and trade with surrounding tribes.

"Under the protection of the Chief Divine! On this northward journey by the Kingdom fleet, everything went smoothly. Along the way, both small and large tribes were awed and expressed friendliness to the

Kingdom. The Southern Ticos Tribes of Brownstone Town were very humble and contributed a batch of food. The Northern Ticos people from Three Rivers City have restrained themselves considerably and agreed to provide trade supplies for the fleet, protecting the Kingdom's merchant ships..."

"At the Rivermouth of Tolpan, we held another alliance meeting with the Tolpan Tribe, showcasing the prowess of the Kingdom warriors and letting them witness the power of the Chief Divine's punishment. At this rivermouth, we left fifty people, adding with previous personnel and those from the Huiyilqi who joined us, forming the two hundred-person village settlement, Tin River Village."

The Divine Revelation Priest Zuvaro overviewed the journey as he summarized the experiences gained by the fleet. Tin River Village is the first Kingdom outpost along the northern route, located at the Rivermouth where the Tolpan Tribe migrates back and forth. It is called "Tin River" due to the large-scale tin ore deposits found upstream. These tin ores are also traded by the tribes of Huiyilqi.

Additionally, of course, if there were insufficient military deterrence and no alliance with the Tolpan Tribe, the wilderness-inclined tribes of Huiyilqi might choose to attack and rob, then migrate into the vast wilderness. Currently, this site is still building a wooden fortress, incapable of storing a large amount of supplies.

"Next, at Fish Mountain Village, we left another fifty people. With the previously left Preaching Priests and dozens of warriors, we completely converted this coastal Tototanak Tribe! This coastal fishing village of seven to eight hundred people is now under the Kingdom's control. However, the resources of Fish Mountain Village are relatively poor, so future activities will primarily focus on fishing and farming to provide food for the coming and going of the fleet!"

"Now, the fleet will leave another three hundred Kingdom warriors at the Yoreim tribe and take away a hundred local militia. Here, it becomes the Kingdom's third, and largest, outpost on the Northern Continent!"

Zuvaro paused and looked towards Songbird Priest. After a brief contemplation, Songbird Priest spoke with a smile.

"Since the Yoreim Great Tribe has converted to the Chief Divine, it should be renamed. The Mayo people, having converted under the thunderbolts of the Chief Divine and being rich in gold ore and copper ore, shall be called..."

The name "Flashing Gold Town" flashed across Songbird Priest's mind but felt it lacked some majesty.

"This Yoreim Great Tribe shall be called 'Reagan Town'!"

Upon hearing this, Divine Revelation Priest Zuvaro nodded slightly and continued.

"Chief Divine blesses! In this way, after taking two hundred people from the merchant fleet, the twelve exploration fleet ships continuing northwards will be of a scale of seven hundred people, allowing for more food storage. However, before we completely divide forces and continue exploring, we must discuss a thorny issue..."

"That issue is about the Yomei Great Tribe of the Yaji people five hundred miles northwest; how should it be dealt with? The Yomei Great Tribe has three thousand warriors and over ten thousand tribespeople, almost the largest tribe within a thousand miles. And the reason they are able to gather such a large scale is because of occupying a vast open-pit coal mine belt, known to them as 'Firestone.' With 'Firestone,' local tribes can resist cold waves, having enough fuel for heating..."

"The coal quality of this mine belt has been tested by the Kingdom's Divine Revelation Place, and it's found to be extremely high-quality bituminous coal! The Divine Revelation division at Black Rock Mountain Iron Mine states that only with this good coal can they smelt good iron that can be forged into weapons... Should we therefore gather all warriors and militia, to take down this great tribe of over ten thousand people in one go?"

Chapter 1222: Expansion of the North American Continent, the Leaders' Conference Decision

"Concentrate all the Samurai militias and conquer the Yomei Great Tribe of over ten thousand people in one fell swoop?"

The chieftain's longhouse was adorned with wooden bells and decorated with antlers. Beneath the high-hanging wooden bell and deer head, five armor-clad leaders sat cross-legged. When Zuwalu Priest asked the question, everyone's eyes twinkled, and their expressions changed.

Samurai Leader Chakapu Stonefirm showed a warlike expression. He patted the bronze axe at his waist and was the first to speak.

"At this moment, the fleet has four hundred of the Kingdom's Warriors, eight hundred spear-wielding militias, a full two hundred sets of cloth-covered copper armor, two hundred greatbows, and twelve Tiger Squat Cannons! With such strength, attacking the Yomei Great Tribe, which only has wooden fences, is a piece of cake!"

"Just one! One large-scale decisive battle! We can completely crush all the Yaji tribes and seize the entire open-pit coal mining area!"

"Good! With the blessing of the Chief Divine, if we break through the Yomei Great Tribe, the gold ore, silver ore, and cloth in the tribe will all belong to the Kingdom's Warriors! We, the Preaching Priests, only want the obedient tribespeople and the coal-rich territories!"

Upon hearing this, Preaching Priest Songbird straightened his back, eyes unmasked with eagerness.

The Kingdom of the Lake was expanding rapidly, and all resources served the military and religion. Legion Warriors, when victorious in battles, receive not only abundant spoils of war but are also granted land, titles, and slaves. As long as Kingdom Priests establish a parish and educate the local tribes, they will be promoted in place and receive greater power and support!

Just like Tomato Priest Tomate, who traveled eight thousand miles to Cuba to establish the Cuba Diocese, aiming to spread the faith of the Chief Divine and fulfill his ambitions. If he manages to establish a parish in eastern Cuba and lay down roots, he will immediately be promoted to the Third-level Main Priest of Cuba! With the massive Taino population of Cuba Snake Island, should the parish scale up to become a General Parish, Priest Tomate is bound to become the first Chief Priest of Cuba, a fourth-level position just below the Elder Priests of Mexica Alliance's High Priesthood!

Such a path of promotion greatly stimulated the ambitions of the Kingdom's generals, Samurai, and priests, a scenario unimaginable to other Central American tribes and even the Mexica Alliance.

Of course, tribes in the Northern Continent are scattered and sparsely populated. Currently, Priest Songbird's "minor goal" is to preach to as many Northern Land tribes as possible, establish the first parish on the Northern Continent, and become a third-level High Priest. To achieve this standard, there must be tens of thousands of devout tribespeople and an armed congregation of thousands.

"If we can conquer the Yomei Great Tribe, the Kingdom's merchant fleet will be able to continuously transport back high-quality bituminous coal! And with the Yomei tribe's coal, Tin River Village's tin, and copper from the two northern tribes, the Kingdom can establish a smelting workshop in Reagan Town to smelt bronze on-site!"

Merchant Fleet Captain Kuyu promised loudly, patting his chest.

"Upon the return voyage, I will consult with Jatili Chief of the Capital City to bring over a group of bronze craftsmen from the capital!"

The three leaders expressed their opinions one after another, each displaying a strong drive for expansion. The crowd's gaze quickly fell on the silent Scholar Mikki.

"Praise the Chief Divine! We are willing to fight for Him!...Scholar Mikki, what do you think?"

Hearing this, Scholar Mikki was solemn. He glanced at the belligerent leaders and spoke slowly.

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! You all think of war expansion, but I want to ask you a few questions..."

"The Kingdom's army can defeat the Yomei Great Tribe, but do we have the foundation and capability to rule them? How many followers of the Chief Divine are there in the Yomei tribe? For such a large tribe of ten thousand people, how many warriors must we leave behind to keep them under control?"

"If the Yomei chieftains lead the tribe to scatter and migrate into the mountains, where do we draw forces to pursue them? If they engage in guerrilla tactics without confronting us directly, how can the Kingdom capture them?"

"You must know, this great tribe has been in the Northern Land for many years and has long-standing, stable relations with the Guai'ma tribe in the northwest and the Opata Alliance in the northeast, through marital ties. Unless we can deliver a fatal blow and capture all the Noble Chiefs and chieftains, they might very well return with reinforcements from other tribes..."

"Moreover, once the Yomei tribe falls into turmoil and war, the split and scatter of tribespeople will halt the existing coal mining. It will be impossible to expand 'Firestone' production, and even the current trade volume will not be met! While the crucial task given to the fleet by Your Majesty is to explore the northwestern coast and search for the Land of Divine Revelation, the Kingdom's fleet cannot be delayed here for too long!..."

Finishing, the other four were left looking at each other in silence.

As Mikki said, Your Majesty's primary task was exploration. The exploratory fleet of twelve longships wouldn't stay put for long before continuing northward. If the Yomei Great Tribe was attacked at this moment, even if the Yaji people were defeated, occupying the northern coal belt would be difficult and likely lead to prolonged guerrilla warfare, hindering the fleet's exploratory progress.

The successful conversion of the Yoreim Great Tribe, smoothly brought under the Kingdom's rule, was backed by many believers and insiders, with a long history of missionary work and trade laying the mutual trust, which cannot be replicated with the Yomei Great Tribe.

"...In the end, the Kingdom's strength in the Northern Land is insufficient, the Chief Divine's faith has not been spread widely enough, and we can't swallow a large tribe of tens of thousands in one gulp."

Preaching Priest Songbird thought for a long while, finally shaking his head, voluntarily abandoning this aggressive expansion strategy. He then stroked his chin, looked at Scholar Mikki, and asked.

"Priest Mikki, since the Kingdom's fleet has arrived here with so many Samurai militias, surely something needs to be done, right?"

"Priest Songbird, while we cannot consume the Yomei Great Tribe, we can rely on our mighty force to make the Yaji tribes yield..."

With sincere devotion, Scholar Mikki responded solemnly.

"We need to gather the fleet and move north, threatening the Yomei tribe to nominally submit to the Kingdom of the Lake! They must mine 'Firestone' and copper ore and pay tribute to the Kingdom, while

we, in turn, grant them Lake Gems and copperware. More importantly, they're to allow the Kingdom's Preaching Priests to preach in the tribe, not stop us like before!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! That's how it should be! Spreading the faith of the Chief Divine is the primary task!"

"Indeed! The fleet needs more coal for the northern journey!"

"The Kingdom also needs better coal!"

Upon hearing this, Preaching Priest Songbird, Divine Revelation Priest Zuwalu, and Merchant Fleet Captain Kuyu all expressed agreement. Seeing this situation, the battle-eager Samurai Leader Stonefirm had no choice but to agree.

In the Kingdom of the Lake, the power of the Chief God Priests always surpasses that of the Samurai! Even within the legions, there are highly respected War Priests. These Kingdom War Priests and Preaching Priests are by no means the weak image of the Mistec priests. They can generally wear thirty pounds of heavy armor and fight with axes on the battlefield.

This lengthy meeting finally reached a consensus, deciding on the Kingdom fleet's next course of action. Subsequently, the Kingdom fleet made adjustments at the Yoreim Great Tribe for five days, before setting sail northward along five hundred miles of coastline, loaded with over a thousand Kingdom's Warriors and Mayo warriors!

This rare armored army in the Northern Land aimed to intimidate the Yomei Great Tribe, demonstrate the terrible Thunderbolt of Divine Punishment, and secure greater trade and missionary rights for the Kingdom of the Lake. Upon the fleet's return, separating the exploratory and merchant fleets, the twelve Kingdom longships would be reduced to a complement of seven hundred men, loaded with more food and coal, in search of Your Majesty's prophesied Gold Mountain Bay!

Chapter 1223: The Royal Banner Arrives, the Grand Camp Outside Golden Bay City

In the early February sun, high and bright like a deity, it illuminates the East, West, South, and North. Sunlight crosses two time zones, nearly ten degrees of latitude, spanning a vast area of four thousand miles from the arid, cold southwestern coast of the North American continent, all the way to the warm and humid southeast of the Gulf of Mexico.

The jungle is dense, rivers crisscross, the climate is warm all year round, and the rainy season is long and heavy. This is the Totonac coast, the frontline where the Eastern coastal tribes and the Kingdom Legion clash, another warm "Golden Bay."

The Kingdom Legion's camp and military post, flying the flag of the Chief Divine, stretch nearly sixty miles from the coastal Snake Lake village camp in the northwest to the Riverbank post by the river in the southeast, forming a semi-encircling line. More than six thousand Kingdom's Warriors lead nearly ten thousand surrendered Totonac Tribal Warriors. A legion of sixteen thousand troops is scattered across five major camps and military posts. They have already endured the long rainy season, confronting the East and West Totonac Alliance for half a year!

The East and West Totonac Alliance centers on the large city of Golden Bay, surrounded by eight or nine tribal camps and military posts, extending over fifty miles, located on the other side of the semi-encircling line. Before the rainy season arrived last year, the Totonac Alliance suffered several disastrous defeats, consecutively ambushed by the Kingdom's army, losing two major posts, reducing their number to over twenty thousand at one point.

However, after replenishment during the rainy season, more tribal reinforcements, bearing the banners of city-states, arrived from the seven hundred miles' distance of Totonac lands in the East. The scale of the entire alliance gradually replenished to more than thirty thousand.

At the start of the battle, no one expected this battle under Golden Bay City to last so long! After the rainy season passed, the Kingdom Legion still maintained the initiative on the battlefield, semi-encircling the thirty thousand Totonac army with a force of sixteen thousand.

Sixteen thousand people semi-encircling thirty thousand, it sounds somewhat unbelievable at first. But after several field battles involving thousands, the leaders of the Totonac Alliance were also forced to acknowledge a bitter truth. That is, the Totonac City-State army with cotton armor, stone axes, stone spears, and short bows, despite having a two-fold numerical advantage, could not win field battles against the copper-armored, bronze-axe-wielding, long spear-armed Kingdom's Main Force.

However, if the scale of the field battle were to rise to tens of thousands, with the Kingdom's main six thousand leading over ten thousand easily collapsed recruited tribes against thirty-thousand strong allied forces in a decisive battle, the outcome would be uncertain. But for now, the leaders of both armies, one content to defend the city, the other hesitating and waiting, have no intentions of staking everything on a decisive battle to determine the winner.

Not fighting in the field means they can only besiege the city. The Kingdom's main warriors number only six thousand; even with over ten thousand cannon fodder defectors, capturing the Golden Bay City and surrounding posts defended by tens of thousands of allied forces is challenging. Thus, the battlefield situation has reached a standstill. The Kingdom Legion sets out a long-snake-like camp, while the Totonac Alliance curls into a spiky porcupine, with both large armies standing off against each other, consuming each other's strength.

"Heh! The giant snake in the rain, the porcupine in the mud, neither can overcome the other, both rolling in water and mud!..."

As the rainy season arrives, Black Wolf Toltec raises the Wolf Banner, returning to the Snake Lake village camp, stopping motionless.

The long rainy season lasted for several months, turning the ground muddy, creating swamps in the jungle, making any large-scale military action costly and infeasible. A thousand miles of seaside lands finally became peaceful, a rare calm. Only the small boats supported by Totonac people continued to arduously brave the raindrops, transporting reinforcements along the coast and rivers to Golden Bay City.

When the harvests of October came, and the rainy season was over, a messenger from His Highness came hurriedly, bringing new instructions and plans. After reading the new plans, Black Wolf Toltec's eyes flickered with thought, pondering for a moment before grasping the meaning.

"Ah! His Highness treats me, Black Wolf, like a fishing net, wanting to capture all the big fish from the various Totonac tribes in one fell swoop!..."

From then on, Black Wolf Toltec changed his usual habit, no longer hasty for battles. He even found leisure to seek out a priest accompanying the army, diligently studying the texts and teachings from the Book of Ama Colley. For he knew that when His Highness arrived, there would surely be an examination of his literacy to see if he had improved.

"Ah! Reading and writing, learning teachings, it's even harder than fighting on the battlefield! And these things, how can they improve the level of fighting?"

Black Wolf Toltec complained in his heart but showed no trace of it on his face. He patiently read word by word through the cumbersome big books. As he gradually sensed, knowing these texts, although unable to help him in battle, could help him learn governance... thus better preparing for war.

"Chief Divine! Why is His Highness's march so slow?"

Black Wolf Toltec sat idly in the main tent, waiting for His Highness's army, turning moldy with anxiousness. The army of His Highness, however, was slow to arrive; it was only until mid-November that news of departure came. From then on, every day the army marched slowly, barely covering more than twenty miles, resting at every camp along the way.

"This march, only a bit better than a tortoise!..."

Black Wolf Toltec complained secretly. From Tree Snake City to New Snake City, a distance of over five hundred miles, His Highness's army took more than twenty days, dragging into mid-December. However, as the two armies drew closer, the communication between messengers became more frequent.

"Hey! Encouraging the generals, appeasing the surrendered troops... these surrendered Totonac tribes are collectively weak and vulnerable, what's the need to appease them?..."

Through the exchanged messengers, Black Wolf knew clearly that His Highness marched so slowly because he was meeting the Kingdom's generals stationed in various regions, summoning the surrounding surrendered tribe chieftains for banquets. Subsequently, His Highness would bestow the alliance-conferred seals, promising the chieftains' statuses, even dividing territories for them to appease them properly.

Then, in New Snake City, also known as the ancient Feathered Serpent City, His Highness stopped the Royal Banner, staying there for a full month!

Reportedly, His Highness meticulously managed affairs, first convening various generals to comfort and commend, and appease the surrendered troops. Then, personally overseeing the grant of lands and titles, giving thousands of territories outside the city to Mexica, Prepetcha, Mistec, and even Tononac warriors.

After completing these priority matters, His Highness checked last year's harvest from the garrison fields, inspected food, cloth, weapons, and timber reserves. The army also brought several dozen Kingdom shipwrights; under His Highness's personal supervision, they established the Kingdom Eastern Shipyard, preparing to construct long-distance oar-sailed longships.

"Phew! Land distribution, garrison farming, and shipbuilding... these are indeed the three things His Highness values the most! I must learn to do it myself..."

His Highness spent a month carefully reviewing the internal affairs of New Snake City before proceeding southward with the army. At Cimpoola's Nianshui City, he stayed for another five days, meeting the chieftains of Nianshui's tribes and banqueting with many chiefs. Among them were several subordinate Totonac Noble Chiefs who offered beautiful young maidens as tribute. His Highness did not refuse as before but accepted them all, sending them to the Kingdom's Divine Power University.

With the arrival of a twelve thousand-strong allied force, coupled with Xiulote's pacifying "united front" along the route, the five hundred mile territory conquered by Black Wolf was finally stabilized.

"From Nianshui City to here, it's only seventy miles! Even crawling like a turtle, they should arrive today..."

Black Wolf Toltec sat in the main tent, holding a book but having no heart to read. On the small table in front of him were copied scriptures, displaying an attitude of diligent study. His mind wandered, constantly being attentive to the surroundings of the tent. Until the Red Hair trusted aide Wuta rushed over, shouting through the camp.

"Commander! Leader! The royal banner of His Highness has finally appeared!"

"Good! Good! I'll go seek an audience with His Highness!"

Black Wolf Toltec sprang up, casually tossing aside the book in his hand, and enthusiastically rushed outside the tent. He had just stepped out when suddenly he halted, turned back inside, and grasped the book upside down in his hand.

"Heh! I, Black Wolf, will hold this book to see His Highness! This is what His Highness said, that... that 'never letting go of the scroll'! Haha!"

Thinking of this, Black Wolf smiled proudly. He moved like the wind, armored over his body, a book in hand, a bronze axe at his waist, followed by a few Red Hair trusted aides, disappearing outside the tent in no time.

Chapter 1224: The King's Art of War

The royal banner of the Black Wolf of the God of Death fluttered high, appearing from the edge of the sky, moving towards the sprawling encampment. In the camp, another banner of the Black Wolf Commander waved. Both towering banners depicted black wolves, yet their postures and patterns were distinct. From afar, one was the beastly incarnation of Xiulotel gazing at the sky, while the nearer one was the night patrol Black Wolf guarding the rise of the sun.

As the two banners gradually approached, the thousands of warriors of the Kingdom's main force in the camp cheered excitedly in response. Their cheers were heartfelt, devout as if in prayer!

"Praise to the most exalted Chief Divine! Praise to the invincible Divine Revelation His Highness!"

This was the cheer of the Mexica warriors, filled with respect and love.

"Oh Chief Divine! It is our merciful King! Our most supreme King has arrived!"

This was the reverent, even somewhat fanatical praise of the Prepecha warriors.

"Ah! Great Great Chief! The Great Chief of Death! His mana is boundless!"

This was the exclamation of the Guajili warriors, born of inner awe and bodily prostration.

The Black Wolf ran amidst the deafening cheers. He ran up a small hill, towards the lakeside, finally arriving under the royal banner of the Black Wolf of the God of Death. His heart was filled with excitement as he knelt directly to the familiar, towering figure.

"Your Highness! Your Black Wolf, pays homage to his supreme Wolf King!"

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! Good! My Black Wolf, you did not disappoint my expectations! You campaigned east for a year, defeating countless enemies, the most valiant Black Wolf under my command!"

Xiulote, clad in royal attire, nodded with a warm smile, praising. He looked at the kneeling Black Wolf, his eyes full of approval and satisfaction. Then, he stepped forward, reached out, and grasped the Black Wolf's hair, ruffling his head. This was a repeatedly enacted ritual of allegiance between the King and his loyal generals, a moment representing intimacy!

"Your Highness! I, Black Wolf Torc, am willing to serve you unto death! No matter... who the enemy is!"

Kneeling on the ground, Black Wolf Torc looked up at His Highness. His eyes brimmed with reverence and fearlessness, with a hint of hidden expectation.

Hearing these words, Xiulote raised an eyebrow, his expression serious, a slight nod. The Black Wolf would not, without reason, say such words at this moment. This was a declaration of determination... and the underlying reason was likely those rumors spreading among the various states.

"My Black Wolf, rise! This eastward expedition has been a year-long campaign, quite challenging. Now, tell me, how goes the conquest of Golden Bay City?"

Xiulote spoke as he moved his gaze. His eyes swept over the Black Wolf's war armor and bronze axe, quickly landing on the book he held, inverted in his hand. With surprise, he exclaimed an "oh," then smiled and said.

"Good! Black Wolf, you have become inseparable from your scrolls! As I told you before, when we meet again, I hope to look at you with new eyes... Once we finish discussing military matters, I shall test you, to see your progress in reading and literacy!"

"Yes, Your Highness, for the past half-year, I have been heeding your words, that which is inseparable... from the scrolls. Uh!... about the test, I have read through the entire 'Book of Ama Colley,' two... three, four quarters of it..."

Black Wolf Torc raised his head, yet as he spoke, his head gradually lowered again, feeling inexplicably sheepish. His words were somewhat stammered, sidestepping he spoke of the front-line battlefield situation.

"Ah, Your Highness! After the rainy season, following your orders, I laid siege without attacking, continuing to apply pressure. And the continuous flow of Totonac reinforcements, all came from the East, gathering around Golden Bay City! Currently, surrounding Golden Bay City, within fifty li west of the Adobe River, over ten seaside city-states, more than thirty thousand Totonac allied forces have gathered!"

"Counting the one or two thousand people I defeated, killed, and recruited outside Golden Bay City, it can be said that all the real fighting enemies of the entire Eastern and Western Totonac territories are gathered here!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote nodded slowly. He pondered over the situation in Totonac territory, recalling the High Priesthood information he had received from his grandfather, and meditated for a long time.

From the ancient Holy Land of the Feathered Serpent City on the western coast to the Holy Land of the Hidden Serpent City on the eastern coast, it is exactly a thousand miles. And from the Totonac people deep in the mountains in the Five Mountains City, Adobe River City, Rabbit Hill City, down to the coast, it is more than two hundred miles. That is to say, the Totonac Coast is a strip of land more than a thousand miles along the coast and more than two hundred miles in depth, with a total area of about 60,000 square kilometers. This is slightly more than half of Cuba Island, slightly less than half of England, or one-third of Henan. Coincidentally, this is also the area that the Kingdom of the Lake can directly control after thoroughly annexing the Chapala Lake Region in the grand construction plan.

"The entire Totonac territory is the origin of the Olmecs, with a long heritage and numerous tribes. This area is crisscrossed by rivers, warm all year round, dense with jungles, while the coastal region is mostly plains. In the thousand-mile coast of the entire Totonac, there are more than twenty relatively large city-states, divided into Eastern and Western Totonac by the Adobe River. Western Totonac has a coastline of about four hundred miles, while Eastern Totonac has more than five hundred miles..."

As Xiulote pondered, he carefully elaborated. Black Wolf Torc stood beside him, listening attentively, just like ten years ago when he was selected into the Prince's trusted aides and listened to the lectures of the then young Prince.

"Black Wolf, a Great General must be familiar with geography and numbers. You have been fighting for many years, and you have gained experience and instinct in estimating geography. But for numerical calculations, you still need to put in more effort!"

Xiulote's expression was solemn as he taught Black Wolf, though his eyes held a smile, and his words were especially patient. Upon hearing this, the Guard Commander Ecatl behind him looked up, glanced at Black Wolf in surprise, and then silently shifted his gaze away.

"The Alliance's previous understanding of the Totonac tribes was actually limited to four to five hundred miles of Western Totonac, at most extending to a hundred more miles of the Eastern Coast. As for the details of the various tribes of Eastern Totonac, we do not know. The Kingdom's exploration fleet should have some results, but unfortunately, it has not returned. Now that both sides are at war, fighting red-eyed, I actually hope they return later..."

"The Alliance's estimated population of the Totonac is seven to eight hundred thousand. Now it seems that this number is obviously underestimated, neglecting the three to four hundred miles further east... The Totonac tribes have successively manifested more than thirty thousand warriors and tens of thousands of able-bodied men. According to the common ratio of one warrior per thirty people, it is estimated that there will be a population of about 1.2 million..."

"Black Wolf, the reason I had you stop and wait in Golden Bay City is that going further east, the geography of the Eastern Totonac territory is very unfamiliar to the Alliance! If the army continues eastwards, the supply line for the campaign will also be stretched too long. If we fail to conquer swiftly, logistics will be hard to sustain, and a disastrous defeat could occur!"

Upon hearing this, Black Wolf opened his mouth, wanting to refute. The sixty-hundred Guajili Battle Group in his hands, the two thousand Mistec Battle Group, and the two thousand defectors from White Snake City are all wolf armies that can go on long expeditions!

This ten-thousand battle-hardened Black Wolf warriors were all personally trained by him, and they are very tenacious and fierce! They are not picky about what they eat, and even without food, they can eat other things... However, remembering the Prince's consistent stance on human sacrifice, Black Wolf pursed his lips and didn't dare to respond out loud.

"In Ancient Feathered Serpent City, oh, also known as Slain Serpent New City, I stayed for a month, carefully inquired with many local tribal sages. Then, I calculated the battle achievements numbers reported by the priests accompanying your eastward army... The Western Totonac tribes originally should have 600,000 people. The area of Eastern Totonac tribes is about the same, and according to the estimate, it should also be around 600,000, just matching the previous estimate."

"Now, Western Totonac tribes have been attacked for a year, and three or four major city-states have turned into wasteland. The Kingdom Legion has taken away over 100,000 tribespeople, sent to Water Valley City for garrison farming, and now transported to the Kingdom. The eastern campaign, in the battles, the killed Totonac warriors, the fleeing Totonac able-bodied men, and the civilian Totonac who died of illness or starvation are estimated to be over 100,000. While the tribes in Golden Bay that we have not yet conquered, along with the remnants of the two major tribes of Adobe River City and Feather Bird City in the southwest, should be close to 200,000. In the more than four hundred miles of Western Totonac territory, those who truly submit to the Alliance and are under our control are actually only 200,000 tribespeople."

Saying this, Xiulote shook his head quietly. Black Wolf's killing nature was strong, sweeping the entire Western Totonac tribes clean, killing almost all the upper chieftains and noble chiefs... But anyway, the Kingdom has indeed grasped this territory solidly, and there are no tribes capable of rebelling. Along the way, he comforted the people, distributed land and titles, established civilian and military garrisons, and encountered no local resistance, indeed making it a lot easier.

"So, Black Wolf, after a year of campaigning, you've obliterated a third of the Western Totonac tribes and conquered a third! And the last third was besieged, with over ten thousand warriors and able-bodied men slain or trapped in the besieged cities!"

"Black Wolf, my Great General, you have effectively crushed the Western Totonac tribes, destroyed their city-state alliance! Even if the tribes in Golden Bay still have a large city and over ten thousand warriors, even if the two tribes of Adobe River and Feather Bird have not yet been pacified... but they have indeed been broken at the spine, insignificant to consider!"

Xiulote remained calm, speaking gently. To him now, the lives of tens of thousands and the fate of hundreds of thousands had gradually changed from warm, tangible entities to cold numbers. He had experienced too much, and his heart was as hard as blood jade. In his mind, deeply etched, was the grand ambition to unify all tribes under heaven and create an empire and nation! And this perilous path to the pinnacle was destined to be filled with blood and bones...

"Black Wolf, as Commander-in-Chief, you must always remain clear-headed, remember our goals, and discern our true opponents! We aim to conquer the entire Totonac coast. Now, our true opponent in battle with the Kingdom is the Eastern Totonac tribal alliance led by the Holy Land of the Hidden Serpent City! Thinking of the true enemy, you will find that capturing Golden Bay's great city is not our most important goal. And this is also why I sent you a message to set up a new plan..."

"Our plan is to gather more Eastern Totonac warriors here, converging on this narrow land of Golden Bay. Then, the army will launch an offensive from the east, cutting off their eastern retreat, leaving behind all these eastern tribes' warriors and able-bodied men!"

"As long as we kill or capture these tens of thousands of Totonac warriors and able-bodied men who struggle to unite under the belief of the Feathered Serpent and rally under the call of Hidden Serpent Holy City, the Eastern Totonac tribes will be emptied, with no courage or manpower to resist! This will be much easier than continuing to trek five hundred miles, fighting hard in the jungle from one city-state or village to another!"

Chapter 1225: Two Allied Chieftains in Golden Bay City

The Royal Banner of the Black Wolf of the God of Death came from afar and stood tall in the great camp of Snake Lake Village, rising even higher than the Commander's Flag of the Black Wolf itself. The cheers from the camp echoed through the skies, so loud that even the Totonac defending army in the military camps over ten miles away could hear it clearly!

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

Upon receiving the scout's report, the Great Chief of the various clans of Golden Bay, "Great Sun" Qiqini, hurriedly ascended the walls of Golden Bay City, gazing towards the northwest at the Alliance's camp. Across the vast distance, he could not see the Alliance's camp or the "Royal Banner" described by the scouts. However, he could see one of the Alliance's nearest camps a few miles away and hear the heartfelt cheers of thousands of the Kingdom's Warriors from within.

"The Chief Divine blesses us! His Highness has arrived, this battle will surely be victorious!..."

After listening for a moment, the expression of Great Sun Chief Qiqini grew grave. The heir of the Mexica Alliance personally coming to battle represented the will of the powerful alliance! This also meant that the mediation he had hoped for was no longer possible.

"With the Mexica Crown Prince personally leading the campaign, he cannot return without significant success! The Mexica's assault will likely commence soon, fiercer than before. Moreover, for the Mexica to call upon so many reinforcements from Trascal Land... it seems that the once-mighty Tlaxcala Alliance has also been completely annihilated!..."

Thinking of this, the mood of Great Sun Chief Qiqini grew heavier. As the leader of the Western Totonac tribes' alliance, he far more than the distant Eastern Seaside tribes, understood the terrifying power of the Mexica Alliance!

"Just a small force of over ten thousand had already caused the Holy Land to fall and the tribes to retreat, not daring to engage in open battle. And now with His Highness of Mexica personally arriving with elite reinforcements... Ah! If only the Mexica had not been so brutally sacrificial with divine descendants during the Tlaxcala Divine War... if only they were willing to accept surrender, preserving my tribe and Golden Bay City... I would have long..."

Great Sun Chief Qiqini's brow furrowed, his mind wavered with hesitation. While staring northwest, he was suddenly drawn back by the sound of heavy footsteps approaching quickly, followed by a loud call from afar.

"Qiqini! Qiqini! The Mexica just brought a great prince and over ten thousand troops!.... May the ancestors and All Gods protect us!"

As he spoke, the Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of the Hidden Snake City came striding toward Qiqini. A red copper axe hung at his waist, and two red copper-tipped javelins strapped to his back, ready for combat at a moment's notice. Upon reaching Qiqini, he extended his robust arm, grasped Qiqini's shoulder tightly, and repeatedly exclaimed.

"Qiqini, our troubles have grown! I've sent scouts to spy, and they've seen that army, carrying many greatbows and thousands of thick-hide heavy armor, along with mysterious golden bronze beasts! It's said these are some formidable imperial guards..."

"Many greatbows? Thousands of thick-hide heavy armor? Golden bronze beasts?"

Upon hearing this, Great Sun Chief Qiqini's face showed surprise, his inner balance swaying intensely. His elite scouts had almost all been lost. Now these tasks of spying and skirmishing had to rely on the warriors from the eastern tribes.

"Quetzal, are you certain?"

"All Gods as witness! My trusted aide saw it with their own eyes!"

The face of Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of the Hidden Snake was solemn as he swore to the divine. Subsequently, he looked at Qiqini, and Qiqini looked back at him. The two nominal leaders of the Eastern and Western Totonac tribes' alliance exchanged glances for a long time, both showing hesitation. After a while, Great Chief Quetzal Coatl spoke first, his eyes moving.

"Qiqini, can you hold Gold Bay City?"

"Quetzal, your tribal warriors are also involved in Gold Bay City's defenses, and they know it best. This is the largest fort in all Totonac land! Our city walls stand five meters tall, built of brick and stone. Inside the city, there are over a dozen fortress-like temples, two thousand's defending army, a year's worth of food for twenty thousand, and easily ignitable black oil... Besides, we have the support of dozens of Totonac tribes behind us, and support from over a dozen city-states!... "

Great Sun Chief Qiqini's heart swayed, but his face displayed confidence.

Even if he wanted to surrender, it absolutely wasn't at the point when troops were at the gates. Gold Bay City had to withstand a few more months of Mexica's assault before negotiations could secure terms of autonomy and preservation.

To hold the Gold Bay City on the plains, they must rely on the Totonac Warriors of the eastern tribes, staunchly defend the surrounding camps, and secure material support from the eastern tribes! Similarly, these warriors from the eastern tribes could also be used as a "bargaining chip" in negotiations...

"Inside Gold Bay City, two thousand defenders, a year's supply of food, and black oil... Outside camps, thirteen thousand defenders, also with a year's supply of food!"

Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of Hidden Snake murmured, analyzing the possibility of holding out. He had the strong support from the Priesthood of the Hidden Serpent Holy City, bringing a total of five thousand warriors and fighters from city-states! With this strength and position, he became the nominal leader of the Eastern Totonac tribes, commanding the Eastern Allied Forces of two thousand three hundred men.

"With the Mexica's reinforcements arriving, the most prudent course of action is to withdraw with the main forces of the city-state! Abandoning Gold Bay City for them to defend alone... Hidden Snake City is over five hundred miles away. For the Mexica to campaign beyond five hundred miles of jungle, they likely cannot sustain such a lengthy supply line to support so many troops...."

At nearly forty, the Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of Hidden Snake was a seasoned war veteran. In the past, he had been more accustomed to skirmishes involving hundreds of people and fighting within the jungles. From a purely military perspective, looking at the city-state's interest, since being fully suppressed by the opponent and unable to contend in open battle, it was correct to strike eastward with the entire army into the deeper jungle. Then, within their own advantageous terrain, combat the enemy using tribal warfare strategies.

"Only now, Mexicas have burned the Feathered Serpent's Holy City, the surviving Feathered Serpent's priests plaintively recounting the horror, stirring the warriors' hearts! Especially a priest named Papu, who sincerely narrated the sights he saw, moving people to tears..."

"The Hidden Serpent Holy City has gathered these priests, summoning the combined forces of various tribes, wanting to seize this opportunity to unite the Eastern and Western Totonac's beliefs... And I, as the leader of the Allied Forces, could rise to become the ruler of all tribes if I can defeat the Mexicas, with the backing of the priests of the Holy Land, and perhaps advance even further..."

"It has been no easy task for me to gather all tribes to resist the Mexica Alliance, building some prestige! ...The current situation is still manageable; if I were to retreat now, resulting in Gold Bay City's fall... the implications for everything I have worked for and the tribal Chieftains' thoughts..."

Considering this, Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of Hidden Snake pursed his lips, shelving the plan for migration and retreat back in his mind. He and Qiqini exchanged looks for a long time in silence. In their minds, they pondered the possibilities of either surrender or retreat. However, after much deliberation, when they opened their mouths again, it was with a resolute decision to hold firm!

"May the gods protect us! Quetzal, if we can hold for another three months, it will be the rainy season in May. If we can last five months, it will be the peak of the rainy season, which could help us endure

another year!... However, to persist, the tribes of Gold Bay still need more support from the eastern tribes..."

"Qiqini, speak freely! The ancestors bear witness! Even if it means dying in battle, I will resist for the gods, standing firm to the end!"

"Ancestors protect us! Quetzal, the Mexicas' reinforcements' grand arrival may lower the morale of the city's tribes, possibly causing Chieftains to consider leaving... We, as leaders of the eastern and western tribes, must join forces to declare our resolve to persist, suppressing all the Chieftains!"

"Declare together, suppress the Chieftains? ...Good! Qiqini, what else do you need?"

"Quetzal, you must send people to the eastern tribes to ask for more food, more boats, and more warrior support!..."

"More food, boats, and warriors? ...Ha! The state of the tribes, they already are..."

Upon hearing this, Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of Hidden Snake showed a bitter smile. He sighed, nodding slightly.

"All Gods bear witness! I will dispatch the envoys!"

"Good! And one last thing... Southeast of Gold Bay City, there is a crucial military camp that concerns the life and death of the Allied Forces!... I want you to lead an army personally to take command!"

As he spoke, Great Sun Chief Qiqini's eyes flickered. His words were true, that riverside military camp was indeed critically important! However, having the Great Chief of Hidden Snake lead thousands of warriors away from Gold Bay City had another purpose. It was to maintain his control over Gold Bay City, preventing any unexpected possibilities...

"Hmm? Qiqini, are you talking about the riverside...?"

Great Chief Quetzal Coatl of Hidden Snake was taken aback, and his gaze flickered.

"The southeastern route for the main army?..."

"Indeed! It's exactly the southeastern route for the main army, the riverside mud fort!"

Chapter 1226: The Kingdom Legion's Plan and Xiulote's Test

"Black Wolf, the next target for the great army is to strike southeast and conquer the Adobe Fortress by the river!"

The bonfire blazed, and the night was deep. After reaching the camp at Snake Lake Village, Xiulote met with the generals, dined and gathered, soothing them one by one. In the blink of an eye, three days had passed. It was not until the end of tonight's banquet that he returned to his command tent to meet with Black Wolf alone and give instructions for the next war plan.

"Adobe Fortress is located at the estuary of the Adobe River, with hundreds of Totonaq people's dugout war boats, continuously supplying food and provisions to the Golden Bay City area. If the allied forces can conquer this port military fortress, they can cut off the retreat of over 30,000 Totonaq allied forces in the Golden Bay City area!..."

"We must keep these 30,000 people here completely. So this attack must be fierce and swift, like a wolf pouncing on a rabbit, giving the Totonaq no chance to react!"

"As you command, Your Highness!"

Hearing this, Black Wolf Torc raised his head, a fervent battle spirit appeared on his face. He clasped his fist on his chest and replied in a deep voice.

"Your Highness, I will immediately mobilize Legion Warriors, gather defectors from all parts, and personally lead the troops! ... With the Chief Divine as my witness! Within seven days, I will spare no effort to capture the Adobe Fortress!"

Hearing Black Wolf's request, Xiulote raised his eyebrows. He looked at Black Wolf's eager eyes and pondered for a moment before solemnly admonishing.

"Black Wolf, you are now the Commander-in-Chief of the legion, leading a campaign for me. I will entrust this expedition to you, but you must not personally attack the fortress like during the northern expedition!..."

Hearing this, Black Wolf opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but then he heard a new directive from His Highness. This time, Xiulote's words carried a noticeable tone of amusement.

"... Besides, seven days seems a bit much! Starting from River Bend Fortress, I can only give you three days!"

"Uh! Your Highness, three... three days?"

"What? My Black Wolf, can't you do it?"

Black Wolf's forehead instantly broke out in a sweat. He looked uneasy, counting on his fingers, stammering a reply.

"Your Highness, just three days ago, thousands of Totonaq Warriors moved into the Adobe Fortress. From setting out at River Bend Fortress to reaching and camping under the Adobe City, it already takes a day. This military fortress is flanked by the river on two sides and near the sea on the other. To the south is the main stream of the Adobe River, to the west is its tributary, and to the east the tidal flats of the coast, making it impossible to deploy troops..."

"The legion can only attack Adobe Fortress from the relatively wide northern side. The Totonaq people have focused their efforts for a year, building sturdy wooden walls on the north side, with two circles of wooden fences, and two small fortresses outside..."

"Your Highness, the seven-day time frame is carefully calculated... Mainly, the Kingdom has no naval forces in the Eastern Sea, only incorporating seventy to eighty dugout warboats from local city-states. The Totonaq control hundreds of warboats, dominating the coasts and rivers..."

Hearing this, Xiulote's brow relaxed, and the smile on his face grew wider.

"Oh! The seven-day time frame, you've calculated it carefully. Very good... excellent!"

"Black Wolf, this time I brought 12,000 people from the East. Four thousand Imperial Guard Legion, eight thousand Yu Yan Legion. The Yu Yan Legion belongs to our alliance; they are regarded as our allies. I plan to station them between here and Nianshui City, maintaining the main army's supply line and securing the rear. I will give you 2,000 of the four thousand Imperial Guards to join the siege of Adobe Fortress!"

"Ah! Giving me 2,000 Imperial Guards to join the siege?"

Hearing this, Black Wolf showed a delighted expression. He thought for a moment and confidently said.

"Your Highness, if you give me 2,000 of the Throwing Vanguard Camp, equipped with enough 'Divine Power Globes'... I am confident that within five days, we can capture the two small fortresses and the main Adobe Fortress!"

"Haha! Granted! Black Wolf, I will not only give you 2,000 Throwing Vanguard Camps, and enough Clay Tribulus... but also assign you another artillery camp! With them, three days will be enough!"

Hearing this, Xiulote slightly tilted his head, revealing a strong sense of confidence. For this expedition, he had brought ten bronze mortars. Each mortar was equipped with 400 rounds of a new type of gunpowder. These mortars would also be left on the Totonac coast and eventually follow the Head Warrior's fleet to the East Caribbean Sea's Cuba Snake Island to greet the arriving European fleet.

"Another... artillery camp?"

Hearing this, Black Wolf thought for a moment and asked in confusion.

"Is it the same as Tupa's artillery camp?"

"No! This time, the cannons are thicker, shorter, and heavier! They can fire thirty-pound stone shells, not to mention the wooden fortresses by the river, even the city walls of Golden Bay City can be directly shattered!"

Xiulote reached out, patting Black Wolf's shoulder, a smile appearing on his face.

"Black Wolf, tomorrow morning, I'll take you to see these heavy cannons transported 2,000 miles from the Qinchongcan Capital! The formidable White Snake Hill City surrendered under their bombardment!"

"Ah! Thirty-pound stone shells? How big must they be!..."

Black Wolf, surprised, stretched out his fingers, calculated for a long time, and still couldn't figure out precisely how big it was. However, he could ascertain one thing: such heavy artillery, the wooden walls of the Adobe Fortress could definitely not withstand.

"Your Highness! If we have such heavy artillery, then indeed three days are enough for the siege! I will gather all the troops, bring the artillery camp the day after tomorrow, and lead the army out! Hmm, how many miles can these heavy guns move in a day?"

"This Thunder God mortar weighs one thousand jin and requires more than ten people to carry it. It can only move a little over twenty miles a day."

"Chief Divine bless! Gathering the troops requires one day. From the encampment at Snake Lake Village to the river bay fortress is sixty to seventy miles, taking three days of marching. And from departing the river bay fortress to setting up camp at the Adobe Fortress takes another day. It takes two more days to attack the fortress, counting the messenger's return... Your Highness, within ten days, I will bring you victory news!"

"Very good! Black Wolf, I await your triumphant news!..."

Black Wolf, pinching his fingers, was calculating while making promises. Xiulote looked at the calculating Black Wolf with some surprise in his eyes. He responded loudly, mused a moment, and then asked another question.

"Black Wolf, it's been more than a year since we last met... I once said that when I see you again, I would test you on the progress of your literacy."

"Uh! This, that... Your Highness, the main army is about to set out, I must return and prepare, thoroughly plot and calculate..."

"Oh! Then let's wait for your victory return and test on the characters!"

Xiulote smiled slightly and nodded. On Black Wolf Torc's tense face, a smile suddenly appeared. But just a few moments later, his smile froze.

"Black Wolf, as a commander-in-chief, although you have the Priests calculating for you, you must also understand marching and logistics. There is still some time tonight, so I just happen to test you with some simple calculations..."

Xiulote, looking leisurely, smiled and glanced at Black Wolf, not giving him a chance to speak, then asked in a deep voice.

"The large army under Golden Bay City has twenty-eight thousand people. In the army, each Warrior requires at least two jin of food per day. According to the Kingdom's custom, the food is transported every 20 days. And the army's food consumption, forty percent is sent from Hidden Serpent City, a journey of 120 miles. The other sixty percent comes from the Tree Snake City camp, a journey of 540 miles..."

"Each civilian can carry 120 jin of food with a daily march of 30 miles. They will consume at least 1 jin of rations per day. Then, calculating from the farthest Tree Snake City camp, to supply the Golden Bay City front in the rear, a batch of civilians takes 40 days back and forth, with a batch every 20 days, requiring two batches of civilians to alternate... Including the rations consumed by civilians on the way back and forth, how many civilians in total are needed to maintain the logistics supply line for the army?"

Hearing the first half of the description from His Highness, Black Wolf was utterly confused, bewildered, not knowing what to do. But as soon as he heard the latter issue, he instantly relaxed. The logistics transport of the army had previously been reported to him in detail by the accompanying War Priest. And he had also noted down the number of civilians conscripted in his heart.

"Your Highness, the food is transported every 20 days in a batch. The logistics from Hidden Serpent City recruits 4,000 civilians per batch. And the logistics from Tree Snake City gathers 8,000 Militia per batch. Combined, that's 12,000 people per batch! Since the logistics supply line requires two batches of civilians, that's a total of 24,000 civilians to maintain it!"

Black Wolf pondered slightly, then confidently answered, spending only a few breaths back and forth. Afterward, he confidently looked at His Highness, waiting for his praise.

"Hmm, not bad! Black Wolf, your calculations are quick, and all correct!"

Xiulote's mouth turned up, extending his hand to pat Black Wolf's shoulder. He maintained his smile and then asked in a deep voice again.

"The Hidden Serpent Holy City of the Totonac people is more than 500 miles east of Golden Bay City, let's calculate it as 540 miles. Black Wolf, once we capture Golden Bay City, we will proceed eastward to attack the Hidden Serpent Holy City! If the logistics of the army and food transportation remain unchanged, delivering food every 20 days, but with the supply line extended by 540 miles..."

"Calculating from the farthest Tree Snake City camp, the supply line doubling means a batch of civilians taking 80 days back and forth, with 20 days per food batch, four batches of civilians can just rotate. Then, when the Kingdom's army reaches the gates of Hidden Serpent City, how many civilians are needed to maintain it?"

Upon hearing the new question, Black Wolf was instantly overwhelmed, his eyes wide open. This time, there was no War Priest's report he could "borrow" from. He struggled for a while with his fingers until His Highness asked again, hesitantly and stutteringly answering.

"Ah! Extending more than 500 miles, the supply line from Tree Snake City doubling... this, uh, the number of civilians... might also double?"

Xiulote smiled and shook his head at this. For the third time, he patted Black Wolf's shoulder, saying meaningfully.

"Civilians bearing food over a thousand miles would consume most of the 120 jin of food they carry on the way back and forth!... Black Wolf, once you figure out this second problem, you will know why I must stay here as long as possible to hold back the Eastern Totonac Allied Forces! And you will also understand how many Warriors can actually advance further east!..."

Hearing this, Black Wolf Torc paused in silence, nodding. He pursed his lips and said softly.

"Your Highness, I understand your meaning. In the future, I will consult the Priests accompanying the army more on calculations..."

"Chief Divine bless! Black Wolf, you are not necessarily limited to consulting Priests... you can also self-learn!..."

Xiulote beamed, extended his hand, and received a book from the Guard Commander. Then, he solemnly placed the heavy book into Black Wolf's hands, patting his shoulder one last time.

"This mathematics handbook, I just compiled it, and had the trusted aides copy over a dozen copies for everyone to learn together! Black Wolf, keep it well, after the war, read it when you have nothing to do, solve some problems as leisure entertainment... Any issues, you can come to ask me!..."

Upon hearing this, Black Wolf Torc's hand trembled slightly, forcefully gripping the thick book, even leaving fingerprints. He looked at the cover, reading the title word by word, his expression strained, his voice getting smaller and smaller.

"Village Priest... Mathematics?... 'Introductory' Handbook? First Edition... Xiulote authored?!... uh! Truly... leisure entertainment..."

Chapter 1227: The Army Strikes, March to the Mudbrick Fort!

The Wolf Banner fluttered, and the sound of copper armor clanged. In just a few days, nearly ten thousand troops were fully mobilized. Black Wolf personally led this elite legion, advancing north for over twenty miles from River Bend Fort, heading directly towards the Adobe Fort southeast of Golden Bay City!

"By the witness of the Chief Divine! The two thousand-strong Imperial Guard Legion, with one thousand in copper armor! A thousand-strong Artillery Camp with ten Sun Divine Eagle Cannons and ten God of Thunder Mortars! The three thousand skilled archers of the Guajili Legion, of which five hundred have copper armor, plus three thousand Totonac Tribal Army carrying ladders for the siege... With nine thousand elite troops in hand, breaking the Totonac Allied Forces is as easy as crushing a turkey with bare hands!"

Black Wolf Torc was full of pride as he ascended a small hill along the way. He personally carried the Commander's Flag, surveyed the nine thousand troops before and after, eyes brimming with confidence. His gaze was sharp, scanning from the rear to the front, first glancing over the three thousand surrendered troops, then pausing at the Artillery Camp.

"Thirty-pound heavy guns! It's truly like thunder!"

Black Wolf showed admiration, his thoughts drifting far. Even after several days, he couldn't forget the initial shock of witnessing the God of Thunder Mortar in action! Then, his gaze moved forward, taking a moment to observe the Armored Guards of the Central Army, knowing they were hardened killers, steadfast in faith.

"By the witness of Chief Divine! His Highness's Imperial Guard is undoubtedly powerful and brave, devout and fearless... but the Dog Descendant Warriors I personally trained are not much inferior!..."

Thinking this, Black Wolf straightened his back, gazing at the three thousand vanguard Guajili Warriors. These Dog Descendant Warriors carried greatbows and had bronze axes at their waists, faces calm and accustomed to killing. Their formation was slightly loose, with squads of scouts running ahead. At this moment, the legion's scouts were engaging in skirmishes with the scouts of the Totonac people.

Feathered arrows flew, and javelins whistled. After a brief skirmish between the teams of scouts on both sides, the Totonac left more than twenty corpses and wounded, hurriedly retreating. The Kingdom's scouts promptly advanced, interrogating a few people, and returned with confirmed information.

"By the witness of the Chief Divine! Garrisoning the three Adobes is the legion from Hidden Snake City, with seven thousand Samurai and Militia! And the Grand Chieftain of Hidden Snake City, Quetzal Coatl, is currently stationed at the main fortress, commanding over two hundred warboats!"

"Good! The Grand Chieftain of Hidden Snake City, Quetzal!"

Upon hearing this, Black Wolf Torc felt invigorated, joyed by the prospect of battle. The Lord of East Totonac Tribes, the Grand Chieftain of Hidden Snake City, Quetzal, personally sitting in the Adobe Fort. Undoubtedly, the warriors stationed there must be the elite of the tribes in the East.

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! Speed up the march! I, Black Wolf Torc, must capture this prestigious prey!"

Nine thousand troops, brimming with momentum, continued their march north along the wide, flat riverbank, which facilitated their movement. The Totonac scouts on land were thoroughly suppressed and reluctant to advance. However, their warboats continued upstream along the Adobe River, spying on the Kingdom Legion.

Occasionally, a few warboats accelerated close and perched archers shot arrows from afar! These sporadic bone arrows, launched from swiftly moving warboats, lacked any accuracy, merely intended to delay the army's advance. And if kingdom archers retaliated, it was challenging to hit the boats, mostly wasting precious arrows.

"Ignore them! The main force continues onward! Set camp before the Adobe Fort!"

Black Wolf Torc squinted, staring at the annoying Totonac boats on the Great River, harboring murderous intentions. After a year of fighting, the Totonac people had realized their weaknesses in large-scale battles. Consequently, the allied forces' engagements had increasingly leaned toward small-scale raids and skirmishes in jungle terrain. In other words, these jungle tribes were gradually adapting, learning how to fight the Kingdom. If this eastern expedition doesn't decisively conquer them, the future battles will cost the Kingdom more dearly!

"By the witness of the Chief Divine! I will not give you time to grow! You are out of time!"

Black Wolf Torc murmured to himself, his gaze becoming sharper. He summoned his red-haired trusted aide, Wuta, and gave a few commands. Soon, over a hundred elite red-haired Hunters, armored, were covering the main force, utilizing their exceptional archery skills to target nearby warboat sailors, driving the Totonac naval forces a hundred to two hundred meters away.

The persistent scout skirmishes continued until the sun leaned west. In Black Wolf Torc's view finally emerged a large and two small military forts along the river. A banner, adorned with a Feathered Serpent entwined around a tree, hung high over the main fortress walls, symbolizing the bloodline of the Divine Descendants, representing the Divine Flag of Hidden Snake City.

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! Finally reached the Adobe Fort!"

Black Wolf, personally accompanied by a thousand Dog Descendant vanguards, circled half the fort from south to north, observing the three military fortresses. The main Adobe Fort was sizeable, housing as many as five thousand defending troops. The south and west of the main fortress were bordered by the Adobe River, with the east near the sea. Only the north was wide and flat, with smaller forts of a thousand-man scale to the northwest by the river and to the northeast by the sea. The three forts formed an inverted "品" character, mutually supporting one another. To attack the main fortress, at least one smaller fort must first be breached.

"Haha! The Totonac defenses seem appropriately arranged! Alas, they lack sufficient strongbows, and don't possess the skill for open field battles. Such a dispersed defense is utterly futile!"

Black Wolf observed for a moment, then faintly smiled. His eyes were filled with murderous intent as he examined the flag atop the main fortress wall, exchanging silent glances with several feathered crown-wearing Totonac chieftains, leaders, and priests on the city wall. Then, Black Wolf extended his finger, pressed it to his chest, made a sacrificial gesture towards the noble chiefs on the wall, and left with a hearty laugh.

"Set up the camp! Be vigilant for five miles around!"

Nine thousand troops hustled, setting camp on the north side of the Adobe Fort. Golden Bay City was to the north of the encampment, while the Adobe Fort lay to the south, requiring nightly patrols and defensive warrior squads on both fronts.

Black Wolf, clad in leather armor, slept a night without encountering any Totonac night raids. Upon the early dawn of the second day, he rose swiftly, convening the army officers and sternly ordered.

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! Prepare breakfast! In three quarters of an hour, all must finish eating! In two hours, the army will officially attack the fort! These two small forts must be eradicated today!"

Hearing the command, Artillery Camp Commander Tupa showed delight. Watching the newly arrived heavy guns in the camp, he was eager, longing to personally direct the shoot.

"Commander Black Wolf, when does our Artillery Camp move out?"

"Artillery Camp... heavy guns..."

Black Wolf pondered for a moment, shaking his head.

"Today, when attacking the small forts, their walls are low, and the Artillery Camp remains unmoved!... Lest the Grand Chieftain of Hidden Snake City, Quetzal, is scared off initially! He has a squadron. If he escapes, leaving the main force, we can't catch him..."

Saying this, he turned and looked at the two Tekos-style Imperial Guard Commanders, instructing them firmly.

"Stone Spear Bo Sa, Throwing Spear Ata! Each of you will lead a Thousand-man Camp of throwing vanguards, ready the Divine Power Globes for throwing, and attack the two small forts! I will arrange for two Guajili recruitment camps for archery cover; and two Totonac conscription camps, to pave the attack path for you!"

"By the witness of the Chief Divine! We won't give you the time to grow! You are out of time!"

The two Tekos Commanders, filled with devotion, loudly prayed in response. Then, they turned without looking back, heading into the camp to mobilize. Soon, the fervent hymn of fiery prayers resonated within the throwing vanguard camps!

Chapter 1228: The Army Strikes, Camps Uprooted and Cities Besieged

"Chief Divine's blessing! His light comes from the red Divine Kingdom, shining on the green earth! He grants us the glory of this life, He grants us peace after death! We are willing to fight for His glory, we are willing to sacrifice for His radiance!...."

The fervent and devout prayers rose from the Vanguard Camp, accompanied by the blessings and proclamations of the accompanying priest, inspiring the fearless warriors of the javelin.

The Grand Chief Quasnake of Hidden Serpent City, clad in leather armor, with javelin on his back and bronze axe in hand, stood at a high point on the main fortress wall. Following the direction from where the prayers came, he looked at the shouting Imperial Guard Camp in the distance, feeling instinctively uneasy.

"Bah! With the blessing of the Feathered Serpent and the ancestors! The main fortress has two circles of wooden walls made of earth, and the two small fortresses have a circle of wooden walls each, all four meters high! Such a solid fortification, how could a few prayers conquer it? You must know that the priests of the Hidden Serpent Holy City are also praying for us!"

The Grand Chief Quasnake, with a confident expression, patted his shield with his bronze axe, boosting the morale of the City-State Warriors on the fortifications.

"All Gods bless us! We have seven thousand defending troops! With endless waterway support! We will hold the Mexica here until the rainy season comes!..."

"Boom boom boom!..."

The continuous sound of war drums echoed from the Kingdom's camp, and thousands of men from the Thousand-man Camp began to line up. Seeing the direction where these Kingdom's Warriors gathered, the Grand Chief Quasnake looked solemn, knowing that today the Mexica intended to attack the two small fortresses. He immediately instructed his trusted aide to select five hundred elite Hidden Snake Warriors to wait for the opponent to exhaust themselves and then launch a surprise raid!

"They are less than ten thousand strong, while I have seven thousand and strong fortifications. As long as we hold for another three months, we reach the May rainy season..."

The Grand Chief Quasnake squinted, pondering silently. At this moment, he still had the confidence to defend the city and the determination to fight to the end!

"Boom boom boom!..."

The drumbeat grew urgent as more than a thousand Totonac defectors advanced with large, simple wooden shields in front of the two small fortresses. The bone arrows from the walls descended upon them from above.

The sound of impact on the shields continued to resound, becoming increasingly dense. Occasionally, defectors were struck by arrows from the flanks and fell limply. The shooting from the city lasted only a quarter before the formation of the defectors began to wobble, showing signs of collapse until two thousand Guajili Warriors with longbows steadily arrived, took their positions, and released fierce feathered arrows!

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!..."

The defending troops on the two small fortresses were instantly felled by dozens, followed by mournful wailing. Both sides exchanged arrows, and the archers on the fortification became cautious, noticeably decreasing their shooting speed. The formation of the defectors also stabilized as a result.

"Damn! These thick-skinned Greatbow archers suffer almost no casualties in the exchange of fire!..."

The Grand Chief Quasnake pressed his lips; his expression turned serious. The Mexica have waged wars everywhere, and the technology for making Greatbows has spread throughout Central America. However, these Greatbows require resilient wooden arrows, and each faction, limited by a lack of bronze tools and insufficient craftsmen, can only produce them in small quantities, equipping only their elite warriors.

In other words, the production capacity of each faction is insufficient to produce a surplus of equipment. Across the world, only the powerful Mexica Alliance can form a crossbow legion of several thousand men.

"The Mexica have so many archers... I'm afraid we won't hold out until the rainy season..."

The Grand Chief Quasnake was full of worries as the resonant drums sounded again from the opposite side.

"Boom boom boom!..."

Over a thousand Totonac defectors, under the supervision of supervising warriors, charged towards the two small fortresses, with the front ranks holding big axes high and the rear carrying ladders. They soon reached the front of the fortress, cutting down a circle of wooden fences outside the fortress walls amidst incoming feathered arrows and javelins. The sporadic cries of the defectors were drowned out by the fierce drum sounds, and in the context of the siege battle, with the "morale boost" from the supervising force, they were not so easily routed.

"Set up the ladders! Charge up!... "As Chief Divine bears witness! Vanguard warriors, advance three levels, be promoted into the regular legion!..."

The Kingdom of the Lake values military merit above all, and siege vanguard merit is especially highly regarded. Urged on by the supervising force and motivated by generous rewards, over a thousand defectors charged onto two fortress walls and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the two thousand Hidden Snake Legion defending the fortresses!

A large swath of crimson blossomed on the city wall like clusters of safflowers blooming among the dense swarm of "ants" and "bees," then the petals fell, and the warriors dropped like insects.

Someone constantly screamed and fell from the fortress walls, while others shouted and continued to climb. Both sides were Totonac warriors, yet they fought to the death on opposing sides!

"Eh! Since His Highness's arrival, even the defectors' morale has risen a notch!"

Black Wolf Torc looked at the two besieged small fortresses, his eyes reflecting amazement.

His Highness had brought with him a powerful reinforcement, offering consolation and promising land and titles. He even changed the name "Totonac Defector Camp" to "Totonac Recruitment Camp" and formed a new "Totonac Vanguard Camp," specially selecting Totonac Warriors who performed well in battle.

It is said that according to the Trascal Land's conquest tradition, this "Totonac Vanguard Camp" might eventually expand to become the Kingdom's eighth legion! And now, for the potential position of the legion commander, all the generals were making every effort to earn merit in war!

"Ha! Even if a new legion is formed, it won't be under my command... After this war is won, I can find an opportunity to sound out His Highness's views... See if I can expand the Guajili Legion under my command to a scale of ten thousand, just enough to formally incorporate the two thousand Mistec Vanguard Camp I've trained..."

Black Wolf instinctively pondered this while watching the battle on the fortress walls. The Totonac defenders in the two small fortresses were all elite members of the Eastern Allied Forces. The large number of defectors climbed the walls, only to be driven back repeatedly, unable to significantly expand their achievements. Their most significant contribution was consuming the defenders' stamina and morale, providing the best opportunity for a decisive blow to come!

Moments later, Black Wolf Torc shook his head with a smile, waving his red command banner.

"Chief Divine bears witness! The defectors' courage only lasts for a moment, and now they are about to collapse... It's still up to the Javelin Vanguard to take action!"

"Beep beep beep!"

The command flag waved, a sharp bugle sounded from the front lines of the battle. Upon hearing the retreat call, the remaining eight hundred defectors no longer had to force themselves to continue, turning to jump off the fortress walls and retreat back in dark clusters.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

The defending troops on the walls had just taken a breath when a volley of bone feather arrows rose from the Kingdom's army, killing dozens on the spot!

"Boom! Boom boom! Boom boom boom!"

The intense drumbeats sounded in the most urgent rhythm, deafening. Then, under the uneasy gaze of the Grand Chief Quasnake, more than a hundred fanatical Mexica warriors, shouting the names of the Divine, rushed toward the two damaged small fortresses, holding "strange spheres" that emitted smoke.

"Hmm? This is... this looks like... the Mexica's Divine Power Weapon?!"

On the main fortress wall, the Grand Chief Quasnake furrowed his brow, contemplating for a few moments before his eyes widened suddenly. As these warriors approached, their devout and fearless cries also reached the ears of the defending troops, sounding like a declaration from the God of Death.

"The Chief Divine bears witness! Fight for the Divine, die for the Divine! Divine Might is awesome; Divine Thunder descends!..."

Chapter 1229: The Army Strikes, Fate Unknown

"Boom! Boom! Boom boom boom!"

The Divine Might was magnificent, and Divine Thunder descended. The fervent Vanguard Samurai hurled the Divine Power Globes, and the terrifying thunder echoed above the two small fortresses, exploding with such force that shards of pottery flew like blades, igniting flames, black smoke, mists of blood, and wails on the fortress walls!

"Oh, Gods! What is this?..."

Atop the main fortress wall, Chief Kua She's eyes widened instantly, heart clenched tightly, then pounding fiercely. Through the gradually dispersing smoke, he beheld the sad state of the two small fortresses, watching hundreds of wailing, dying warriors, his body began to tremble.

"This is the Evil God! It's the evil power of the Volcano Demons! The cursed Mexica will suddenly perish, just like the people of Teotihuacan!..."

The Feathered Serpent Priests on the city walls inhaled the divine smoke, shouting frantically, dancing the sacrificial dance with wild abandon, trying to stabilize the morale on the main fortress wall. Whether it was the Totonac Warriors stationed on the fortress wall, or the elite warriors waiting to attack below the wall, all were pale and trembling under the "Divine Might" of the explosion.

In the world of Central America, for the tribes devoutly believing in the Divine, this mysterious fear of the unknown was far more demoralizing to the samurai militia than its actual lethal power!

"Chief Divine! After using the new granulated gunpowder, the thrown Divine Power Globes... The power has at least doubled!"

Witnessing the devastation of the two small fortresses, Black Wolf Torc raised his eyebrows, eyes filled with surprise, heart equally shaken.

Due to the increased power of the new gunpowder, more than ten of the over a hundred Vanguard Samurai throwing the Divine Power Globes got too close and were instantly killed within three steps of the explosion. Black Wolf understood clearly that no matter how fierce he was, even clad in heavy armor, he could not escape such a terrifying explosion at close range!

"In the face of the new Divine Revelation Weapon... the era of warriors is gradually coming to an end..."

Black Wolf murmured as he watched a thousand copper-armored Vanguard Imperial Guards climb the smoke-filled walls. The Guards swung their bronze axes, slaying dozens of madly resisting Totonac Warriors. What followed was a large surrender of the Defending Army, with over a thousand in fear and despair.

More of the Kingdom's Warriors poured into the fortress, cheers, and cries echoing to the heavens. As dusk approached, the Chief Divine's banner was raised on the two small fortresses, a large number of prisoners were escorted out, and the morale of the mud-brick main fortress' Defending Army plummeted to its lowest.

"Blessings of the Chief Divine! It's getting dark, tonight have two Thousand-man Camps guard the two small fortresses! Tomorrow, dispatch the grand army to take down the last main fortress!"

Black Wolf's lips curved up, listening to the report of his trusted aide Wuta, giving orders for tomorrow's plan. In this battle, half of the Defending Army in the two small fortresses were severely wounded and killed, and half lightly wounded and captured. The Totonac conscription camp lost over three hundred people, gaining one thousand defectors.

"If this continues, the defectors from the tribes will keep increasing... Hmm, seeing today's battle, I hope the big fish in the main fortress doesn't get scared away!..."

As darkness enveloped the land, torches were lit atop the mud-brick main fortress, and an ominous shadow filled Chief Kua She's heart, his body chilled.

"Oh, Gods! Both small fortresses fell after just one day! The Mexica have allied with the Volcano Demons, wielding such terrifying Divine Power Weapons... I fear I cannot hold for ten days or half a month..."

Recalling the day's explosions, Chief Kua She was filled with dread. He couldn't comprehend the thunderbolts and could only see it as the power of demons. Within a single day, all his confidence in defending the fortress and resolve to fight to the end had vanished. The urge to retreat had never been more intense in his heart.

"The hall of the God of Death spreads death... One cannot fight against Divine Power, but should avoid it from afar..."

Chief Kua She inhaled a roll of divine smoke, trying to calm his anxious heart, pondering the next steps to take.

"Once the mud-brick fortress falls, the main forces of the various warrior kingdoms around Golden Bay City will likely be lost here! The five thousand Hidden Snake Warriors at my disposal also need time to retreat in batches..."

"No! I must dispatch an envoy overnight, notify the allied forces by water route. Mobilize hundreds of war boats from the allied forces, transport the reinforcements of each tribe to defend this camp. Then, replace the warriors of my Hidden Serpent Holy City with them, retreat them across the Great River! The Eastern tribes must maintain the retreat route here and withdraw in batches!"

"We must continue to hold! At least for five more days! Hmm... Let the priests inspire overnight, gather all the archers! Set up barricades on the wall, pile up mud overnight to guard against the Mexica's 'Divine Power Globes'..."

That night, Chief Kua She tossed and turned, chaos filling the mud-brick fortress. Yet some miles away, Black Wolf slept soundly.

By the following morning, the Kingdom's grand camp was bustling once more. As the cooking smoke just cleared, large groups of warriors lined up in formation. Black Wolf Torc ascended the small fortress, gazing at the main fortress wall a mile away, and met the gaze of Chief Kua She, who wore a Feather Crown.

According to the traditions of each tribe, the fiercer the war, the grander the scale, the more splendid and imposing the clothes of the Commander-in-Chief, who appeared valiantly before the mighty army!

"Blessings of the Chief Divine! I will offer him the most revered sacrifices!"

Black Wolf Torc smiled, once again signaling the gesture of sacrifice. Chief Kua She pressed his lips in silence, turned his head, inspecting the defenses on the wall.

Wooden gates and panels were erected on both wooden walls to shield against arrows, layers of mud and sand were piled to guard against fire, along with heavy stones and rolling logs. Numerous archers stood behind the walls. After a night of inspiration from the priests, though the Defending Army's complexion was worn out, their fighting spirit remained.

"Ah! This Chief Kua She is capable of such defense... He can be considered a skilled war leader!"

Black Wolf Torc observed for a while, his expression turning solemn. He nodded from afar to the Feather Crowned Chieftain opposite him, making a gesture of commendation. Then, before the Kingdom Warriors arrayed in one camp after another, Commander-in-Chief Black Wolf's lips curled as he waved a grand golden flag!

"Blessings of the Chief Divine! We drive the divine Copper Beast to destroy the enemies of the Divine War!"

Artillery Camp Commander Tupa led the prayers, and hundreds of artillerymen and militia echoed the cries. Then, under the cover of a thousand Armored Guards, ten Thunder God mortar cannons and ten

Sun Divine Eagle Cannons were pushed forward to the main fortress. Each cannon, be it broad or narrow, aimed at the fortress walls where Chief Kua She stood!

"Blessings of the Chief Divine! He grants us Divine Power to strike our enemies!"

Commander Tupa prayed again, as the artillerymen busily got to work. Stone rounds were loaded, the muzzles sealed, fuses pulled out, then torches raised. Everything was orderly, well-trained.

On the mud-brick fortress, Chief Kua She's brow furrowed deeply, as a strong sense of dread surged in his heart. He stood behind a sturdy wooden shield, guarded by dozens of trusted aides, yet felt no sense of security. He watched the copper beasts flashing golden light, recalling the legendary thundering of the Copper Beasts, half in suspicion, half in hesitation. He observed the artillerymen opposite lighting the cannons, pale blue smoke rising from the muzzles, and suddenly his eyelids twitched furiously, mindlessly muttering to himself.

"Oh, Gods! I have a foreboding! ... Omen of doom..."

Before his words ceased, the ominous thunder roared explosively, rushing straight at him!

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

Chapter 1230: The Army Attacks, Divine Punishment Falls!

Thunder rumbled, and stone projectiles shot furiously! The small stones flew straight, smashing through wooden boards and shields, scattering shards of wood. These were the small-caliber Sun Divine Eagle Cannons. Meanwhile, massive stones roared into the sky, tracing a high arc before crashing heavily onto the earthen fort's wooden walls, a force impossible to withstand—those were the God of Thunder's Mortar Cannons!

"Boom! Boom! Crack..."

The heavy thud of boulders made the entire wooden wall shake violently! At the impact points of the massive stones, any obstruction was easily shattered! Bodies were torn apart, wooden splinters flew everywhere, and the sturdy wooden wall resembled a clay model in the hands of the Heavenly Divine, easily breaking with a gentle pat, leaving deep cracks!

"Oh gods! Feathered Serpent Divine!..."

Atop the earthen fort, Great Chief Quasnahe let out an alarmed cry before vision turned to black. Violent tremors came suddenly, knocking him to the ground, sending waves of pain through his body. In that moment, he was like an ant on a clay model, easily swept into a crevice by the hand of the divine, unable to control his fate. But then, the ominous destiny approached, and death loomed before him! Yet, his vision remained a pitch-black void...

"Ah! My eyes! My eyes! Ancestors... save me!..."

Great Chief Quasnahe lay on the city wall, wailing in terror, his voice filled with disbelief! Fine wooden blades had pierced his eyes, unbearable pain surged from them, and blood-tears rolled down his wounded face. In front of him, the wooden barrier had been utterly blown apart by several stone projectiles, and the family warriors guarding him were similarly dead and wounded!

Cannon fire thundered, stone projectiles shattered shields, and even under heavy guard, they easily felled Great Chief Quasnahe. This was a divine punishment the Totonac tribes had never imagined!

Two 30-pound stones, larger than a human head, landed a few meters before and behind Great Chief Quasnahe. One stone deeply embedded itself atop the wooden wall, while the other struck the outer wall and then fell into the mud. This stretch of wooden wall, over ten meters long, split with several long cracks. The cracks ensnared Great Chief Quasnahe's ankle, foreshadowing a precarious collapse.

"The Great Chief has fallen! The Great Chief has fallen!..."

"Leader, save the leader!..."

"Ah! Demons! Evil Power! This is the evil power of the volcanic demons!..."

"It is divine punishment! Terrible divine punishment!"

"All gods protect us! Feathered Serpent Divine protect us! Ancestors protect us!"

"No! It's the unstoppable War God! War God! We beseech you..."

Twenty cannons fired a round, like the divine thunder punishment, shaking the hearts of all the Totonac defending army. This terrifying thunderbolt deeply shocked the warriors of the eastern seaside tribes and emerged as their worst fear—a divine punishment! Following a brief silence, frantic and despairing chaos suddenly exploded along the fort walls!

"...Chief Divine protect us! He grants us divine power, striking our enemies!"

Amidst the chaotic cries at the wall top, a moment flashed by! After the Sun Divine Eagle Cannons fired a round, the thick Thunder God Mortars were reloaded!

"Ignite! Fire!..."

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

The roar of heavy stones approached again, striking the front and back of the fort with unstoppable force. Countless wooden shards flew like blades, the sharp sound of wood snapping stabbed at everyone's ears, as if the entire fort wall was wailing mournfully!

The second round of bombardment passed, leaving the chaos on the fort wall irrecoverable. Hundreds of warriors and militia shouted in terror, rolling and leaping off the high walls. Many, in sheer panic, leapt outward, breaking legs and spines under the watchful eyes of thousands of Mexica legion. Behind the wall, two thousand warriors reserved were now terrified and bewildered. At least half knelt to the ground, praying frantically to the All Gods!

"Chief Divine protect us! Ignite, fire!..."

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

The third round of stones smashed into the fort walls once again. This time, the struck segment of wall issued an unprecedented "crack," like the final scream of the dying, then it split and collapsed thunderously!

"Good! Great! Truly Chief Divine's protection! Truly the God of Thunder's weapon!"

Seeing the collapsed wall and the chaotic, dense defending army beyond the gap, Black Wolf Torc laughed heartily, invigorated and uplifted! He immediately waved a red flag, projecting orders to the prepared Kingdom Legion.

"Select a group of throwing vanguards, hurl a round of Divine Power Globes at the gap! All troops armor up, and once the throwing explodes, charge into the fort for me!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Fight for the divine, die for the divine!"

Over a hundred throwing vanguards, clutching smoldering clay tribulus, charged towards the gap in the wooden fortress. Their assault encountered virtually no resistance, followed by a dense volley of throws!

"Boom boom boom boom boom!..."

The effect of this volley sent a tremor through Black Wolf Torc. The clustered clay tribulus exploded inside and outside the several-meter gap, creating a pit of corpses from blood and flesh!

The nearby Totonac defending army completely lost their will to fight, turning desperately to flee towards the rear fort's port. Amidst frantic and terrified cries, the faint sound of despairing wails echoed!

"The Great Chief has been blasted to death by divine thunder! Dead!..."

"The Mexica! The Mexica have stormed in!..."

"Oh gods! I implore you..."

The City-State's leader perished, and hordes of armored warriors poured in, driving thousands of Hidden Serpent City warriors into complete collapse! Groups of tribal warriors fled to the rear fort port, raising war clubs, hacking at each other chaotically, just to seize docked war boats, hoping to escape across the Great River, their only path to survival.

The Kingdom's Warriors surged in like waves, prompting masses of Totonac defending forces to kneel and surrender. The Imperial Guard Vanguard's wielded battle axes, slaughtering their way to the port, cutting down the last hundreds of opposing enemies around the war boats. Limbs and severed fingers littered the boats, while surrounding river waters were dyed crimson with blood...

"...Praise the Chief Divine! Praise His Majesty! May the divine bless the kingdom with glorious victory!"

Three thousand Kingdom's Warriors poured into the fallen riverside camp, securing every corner and guarding all defectors. Then, the triumphant cheers and prayers resounded throughout the entire camp, carrying eastward across the Great River!

"May the divine bless the kingdom, may he bless the Imperial Guard Legion!"

Imperial Guard Commander, Stone Spear Pozo, brandishing his blood-dripping Copper Spear, leapt onto a docked war boat. Staring at the fleet of over a hundred war boats rowing farther away, escaping to safety, he spat bloodily off the side.

"Ha! After all this fighting, splattered with blood everywhere, we will eventually appear before you, even if Your Majesty's legion advances another thousand miles!"

"Bozoth, Praise the Chief Divine! Praise to the Chief Divine! With these war boats, Your Majesty finally has a naval force here!"

With a Bronze Axe in hand, Throwing Spear Ata completed a full inspection, a smile wide across his face.

Bozoth and Ata, leading the most devout throwing vanguard camp, were the highest-ranking commanders of the Tecos Tribes in the kingdom. Their loyalty to His Majesty surpassed that of many Mexica Generals. They aspired to lead the Kingdom Legion to conquer all Tecos Tribes, ultimately forming a Tecos Tribal Legion! Then, claiming the new Legion Commander's position...

"Good, praise the Chief Divine! We captured more than a hundred war boats! With these war boats, His Majesty now has a naval force here!"

Stone Spear Bozoth pounded his chest with his fist, letting out a forceful laugh.

"With these boats, we can cross the Great River, sweeping through the coastal Totonac camps on the opposite shore, cutting off Golden Bay City's riverine support!"