

Civilization 1241

Chapter 1241: Shadows in the Temple, Murderous Intent and Betrayal

The sun silently sank, shadows creeping in. The Feathered Serpent's side hall was hidden in the depths of the temple pyramid, lit torches flickering in the night breeze blowing through the ventilation shafts. The firelight danced unsteadily, the heavy bricks reflecting the faint glow, outlining the silhouettes of the many chieftains who had fallen, with only a few graceful figures still standing.

"Hmm! Such little tolerance for alcohol... Just a cup of blood wine, and they're all drunk!..."

The statue of the Feathered Serpent cast a long shadow. The Serpent Priestess Miyava did not stand in the shadow, but boldly stood under the firelight. Her eyes sparkled, surveying the many great chiefs in the hall, observing each one carefully. The Feathered Serpent's side hall, which had just been clamorous and boisterous, fell into sudden deathly silence. Head Warrior Qiyan crouched by Chieftain Qiqini, gently supporting the family head's back, letting him sit on the ground.

Qiqini lowered his head, resisting the intense dizziness. His face felt numb, his eyelids as heavy as a thousand pounds, yet with fierce willpower, he refused to let his eyes close. He had only drunk half a cup of blood wine, so he wasn't heavily drugged. Although he couldn't stand and walk, he could still barely talk.

"...Qiyan, go!... Let my personal guard come in! Subdue the chieftains, tie them all up!..."

"Yes! Family Head..."

"Urgh! Wha...t's...the matter?"

It was then that a faint voice, difficultly rose from nearby, causing both of them to pause. Qiqini looked startled, forced his head up to see, just in time to meet another pair of confused eyes... It was the burly and strong chief of the Lake Sacrifice City tribe, the young Ozli.

"All Gods! This... this wine... is wrong!..."

Chieftain Ozli slurred, struggling to stand, speaking intermittently. His actions were bold; like Qiqini, he drank little of the blood wine. Being young and robust, the mightiest warrior of the tribe, though weak all over, he could still attempt to stand from the ground.

Seeing this, Qiqini's eyes instantly turned fierce. And Ozli, meeting the gaze, paused momentarily, then suddenly realized.

"Qiqini? Is it you?! You actually... in front of the holy statue, in the oath-taking blood wine... drugged it?..."

"Qiyen, hurry! Go, kill him first! Then let the personal guard in!"

The Great Sun Chief Qiqini squinted his eyes, making no attempt to hide his murderous intent. To avoid the suspicious chieftains from becoming alert, he had hidden a team of personal guard warriors a distance away, bringing only the loyal and brave Head Warrior to the hall for the oath-taking. Now, merely waiting for half a quarter of an hour, letting the large team of personal guard warriors enter the hall... this hastily set-up scheme would be a great success!

"Hmm... what a strong warrior! To think even the meticulously blended blood wine didn't knock you out!..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava chuckled, lightly stepping close to the robust Ozli. Charming and seductive, she reached out with a playful smile, gently stroking the startled face of the Lake Sacrifice Chieftain, then stroking the muscular chest. She then traced the same mysterious heart shape at the position of the man's heart with her calloused fingertip.

"Eh?...Miyava? Meticulously blended blood wine?... Could it be, not Qiqini..."

Chieftain Ozli's face revealed fear, feeling the woman's smooth fingers, smelling her enticing fragrance, like sniffing a dangerous yet beautiful poisonous flower.

"Was it you?!..."

"Hmm, yes, it was me!..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava nodded with a smile, her fingers trailing down the man's chest, teasingly. Then, her expression lifted, her fingers swiftly grasped, and when retracted, there was a sharp Obsidian Dagger. This dagger had an ancient Olmec emblem engraved on it, a sacrificial dagger passed down through generations.

"Young and strong brother Ozli... Let me borrow your Obsidian Dagger for a while... Just for a moment, I'll return it to you soon!"

In Ozli's astonished gaze, the Serpent Priestess blew a kiss with a smile, then licked her lips seductively, holding the ancient sacrificial dagger, and turned towards her brother, the Great Sun Chief Qiqini.

"My dearest brother... Even at this moment, you still don't trust me! You've only drunk a little blood wine and still won't come to me for an antidote... I'm so hurt!"

"Miyava!..."

The Great Sun Chief Qiqini squinted, deeply furrowing his brow. His gaze paused briefly on the dagger in the Serpent Priestess's hand, then looked a few steps away at the four silent Serpent Assistant Priests with daggers in hand, speaking warily.

"At this point, what do you intend to do? The chieftains are strong, the drug's effect won't last long... Quickly let my personal guards in! Control everyone!"

With the last sentence, Great Sun Chief Qiqini's face flushed, fighting against the numbness of his tongue, he almost shouted out. He was not only speaking to the Serpent Priestess, but also to Head Warrior Qiyan, trying to summon his loyal family guards!

"Hehe! My dear brother, still as cautious as ever!... The Feathered Serpent Temple is built with thick bricks and stones. You've drunk the Blood Wine and are quite drunk, your voice is weak, it might not travel far!..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava smiled lightly as she walked to the side of the seated Great Sun Chief. Then she squatted down, gazing into Qiqini's eyes with a charming and radiant smile.

"My dear brother, don't waste your energy!... The position of your personal guard is actually farther than you imagine... Shouting like this will only call the Temple Warriors I've positioned outside the hall... This Feathered Serpent Temple, after all, is my temple!..."

Upon hearing this, the face of the Great Sun Chief Qiqini changed. For the first time, shock appeared in his eyes. Because the positions where his personal guards hid were instructed by him personally for the Head Warrior Qiyang to arrange... Qiqini was uncertain and suspicious, turning to look at the Head Warrior Qiyang supporting him, and shouted harshly.

"Qiyang! You... restrain Miyava for me! That is my order!"

Upon hearing, Head Warrior Qiyang nodded, silently releasing the Family Head's hand. Then he reached for the sharp Obsidian Short Dagger, standing in front of the Family Head, staring silently at the smiling Miyava.

"Oh? At this time, blocking me? You truly are a ruthless man!..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava raised an eyebrow, her gaze instantly turning pitiful yet with a playful smile. Behind her, four Serpent Assistant Priests silently surrounded with sharp blades. Their movements were quick and agile, evidently trained as Death Warriors. The bluish glow on their daggers foretold a dreadful death.

"Qiyang! Act quickly!"

"Tsk, ts! Ruthless man, do you truly want to stop me?..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava's smile remained unchanged, yet her gaze turned dangerous. The sharp Obsidian Dagger spun lightly between her fingers, like a butterfly dancing in a cat's paw, beautiful yet embodying death!

Seeing this, the Sacrificial Lake Tribe Chieftain Ozli's pupils contracted, his eyes full of vigilance. He had never thought that the Serpent Priestess he admired, who appeared gentle and charming, was also a fierce dagger master!

"Ah! Ruthless man, you truly aren't ruthless enough... As a man, at this moment, how can you waver?..."

Saying this, the Serpent Priestess Miyava shook her head with regret on her face. Qiyang was a useful vine that could help her seize the Tribe's Warriors; if he died pointlessly here, it would be too wasteful.

"Not ruthless enough man!... If he knew all you've done, he wouldn't spare you!..."

Upon hearing this, Head Warrior Qiyang's face showed intense pain and struggle. He gritted his teeth, looking at the charming yet cold face of the Serpent Priestess, and softly pleaded.

"...In the name of the Ancestors! You said... you only wanted to seize the Chieftain's position but would spare the Family Head's life..."

"Hehe! Ruthless man, you're not only not ruthless enough but also adorably foolish!..."

Hearing this, the Serpent Priestess Miyava covered her mouth, laughing heartily, her form moving with her laughter. Then her smile vanished, her eyes turned sharp, pupils standing like a serpent's, revealing a chilling intent to kill.

"In the name of the Ancestors! Stand aside! Otherwise, die with him!"

"..."

Head Warrior Qiyang was silent for a moment, finally turning away, stepping back two paces. He bowed deeply to the seated Great Sun Chief, with tears rolling down his eyes.

"Qiyang, you... you! Are you going to betray me?!"

The Great Sun Chief was incredulous, showing panic. He looked at the Head Warrior who had guarded him for over a decade, always loyal, and urgently shouted.

"Protect me! What has Miyava given you? I'll give you double!"

"Hehe! My dear brother, what I gave him, you cannot give!..."

Miyava gave a charming smile, walking briskly forward. She took Qiyan's place, leaning against Qiqini's back, the familiar full sensation instantly greeting him. Then, the woman gently extended her arms, embracing her brother, whispering softly in his ear.

"After all, you are not a woman..."

Chapter 1242: Sacrifice and "Truth

The Temple was deep and dark, with the flickering of the leaping bonfire. On the heavy stone walls, ancient Feathered Serpent reliefs slithered like serpents. High upon the Divine Platform, the solemn statues of the Divine flashed with turquoise eyes. And under the calm gaze of the statues, laid scattered about the grand hall were dozens of Eastern tribes' chieftains and their trusted aides. At this moment, within the entire Temple, only six were standing, with two sitting together leaning on each other.

"Hehe! My dear brother..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava knelt in the Stone Hall, embracing the Great Sun Chief Qiqini from behind. Her actions were gentle, caressing Qiqini's cheek, her face adorned with a soft smile, like that of a close lover.

Qiqini's eyes were wide with anger, filled with shock and rage, and an unmistakable fear. He gritted his teeth, glaring at Qiyan, the Head Warrior who had served faithfully for years, his voice trembling.

"You? You all?!..."

"Family Head... I..."

Head Warrior Qiyang hung his head low, tears streaming down his face, not daring to meet Qiqini's furious eyes.

"Yes! Qiyang is a strong warrior too! He feared your wrath, knowing you wouldn't spare him. So he seized this chance, struck first, and offered you to the Divine!..."

"Let the Ancestors bear witness! Let the Divine bear witness!... Qiyang! I... I forgive all your wrongs! As long as you save my life!..."

At the brink of life and death, after a brief moment of shock and disorientation, Qiqini displayed the character of a formidable leader. He raised his palm, glancing towards Miyava, swearing to the Divine and Ancestors.

"Miyava, I swear to the Ancestors and the Divine! I am willing to relinquish all the powers of the tribe, to surrender all the warriors and wealth! ... As long as you grant me a path to survival, exiling me from the myriad tribes of the Golden Bay... For our father's sake! I have cared for you since you were young!..."

"...Miyava... Chieftain?..."

Hearing this, Head Warrior Qiyang abruptly raised his head. He dared not look at the former Family Head, but instead looked towards the Serpent Priestess whose expression slightly shifted, his eyes carrying inquiry and faint hope.

"Tribal power? Father?..."

Upon hearing this, the corner of the Serpent Priestess's mouth curled up, her smile growing ever more radiant. She looked at her half-brother with interest, observing his forcibly calm demeanor, just like admiring a self-carved mythological mural.

"Hehe! Qiqini, why not mention mother? ... My mother died at your mother's hands!..."

"...Miyava... At that time, it was I who protected you!..."

"Yes! My strong brother, I have admired you since childhood, and I have repaid you too..."

The Serpent Priestess nodded, her face displaying a maiden-like admiration. She gently pressed her cheek to her brother's, then suddenly sighed amidst Qiqini's hopeful eyes.

"What a pity! I am not a man... Otherwise, how could the position of Chieftain fall to you?..."

"Miyava... the position of Chieftain, I will give it to you! ... As long as you banish me, I will leave the land of the Golden Bay forever, and never return! I swear by the honor of the Ancestors!..."

"What a pity! I'm not a man! ... It's never as convincing to rule the tribes as a powerful Divine Descendant Warrior, making everyone submit..."

The Serpent Priestess's expression was somber, as if not hearing Qiqini's words, but murmuring to herself instead. She pressed close to her brother's cheek, stroking his chest, tracing a ceremonial heart shape.

"Brother, do you understand? You are a man, so long as you are brave enough, even if exiling father or killing brothers, you can still control the tribe... But I cannot, I am a woman! To securely sit as Chieftain, I not only need the support of the Mexica, to clear away the stubborn Elders of the clan... I also need a perfect reason to open the city gates and take over your power!..."

"...A perfect reason?..."

Hearing this, the Great Sun Chief Qiqini shivered all over, sniffing slightly as if catching the scent of death. He lowered his head, staring at the Sacrificial Dagger of Olmec heritage in the Serpent Priestess's hand, then glanced at the Sacrificial Lake Tribe's Chieftain Ozli who was standing in the corner, fully alert. He uttered with difficulty.

"Miyava... Your reason is... to avenge me?"

"Yes! As expected, my dear brother! You thought of the same thing as me..."

The Serpent Priestess Miyava's smile was brilliant, even kissing Qiqini on the cheek, as a final farewell.

"Brother, go in peace! After you leave, I will avenge you, hold a grand funeral for you... Bury you alongside father..."

As she spoke, Miyava maintained the gentle embrace from behind, raising the sharp Obsidian Dagger, its tip aimed at the heart she had just traced. Feeling the blade close to his chest, Great Chief Qiqini trembled again, shouting sternly.

"Wait, wait a moment! Miyava, I haven't told you the location of the family wealth! I also know many clan secrets, enough to hold control over various noble members of the tribe! That's right! And the secrets of the Eastern tribes, the secrets of the Hidden Serpent City's Holy Land, the Divine Artifact Ritual Plate of the Olmec heritage!..."

Hearing Qiqini's cries, the approaching Obsidian Dagger paused slightly, stopping at his chest. The Great Sun Chief's expression was tense, sweat pouring from his forehead, his entire body soaked. But amidst this profuse sweating, he was pleasantly surprised to feel the numbness in his body seem to ease a bit, if only he could delay further...

"The family's wealth, an entire secret chamber filled with jade, gemstones, and gold and silver! And the location of the secret chamber, it's right in... ah!! ugh!..."

An indescribable pain shot through his heart in an instant. The Great Sun Chief Qiqini trembled violently, struggling to lower his head, seeing only an Olmec dagger buried to the hilt, and the bright red blood gushing from his chest.

"Brother, go in peace! I haven't truly seized power yet, I can't let my guard down to listen to those lengthy secrets you have... Feathered Serpent Divine! I have presided over many sacrifices, and this is the last one, offering the most revered divine descent to you, the exalted one!..."

Miyava pressed against Qiqini's cheek, a look of sacred sorrow on her stunning face. She released the dagger from her hand, lovingly embracing her brother, letting the blood saturate their robes. She murmured gentle reassurances, but her gaze was fixed on the Feathered Serpent Divine's statue, staring into those turquoise eyes.

"Pierce the heart, sacrifice to the divine... it will be quick, very quick! Everything will pass, you will go to the divine kingdom of the sky, to enjoy peace and beauty forever! Many divine descendents from the tribes will also be buried with you... the old belief should be buried in the most sacred sacrifice. And the new belief will begin in my hands... may the divine protect us!..."

"Miyava! You betrayed me, and you want to betray the entire tribe? ...You... beautiful venomous snake! ... ugh! ugh! ... you... so... ruthless..."

At this moment, the mighty and powerful Great Sun Chief struggled like a dying fish in Miyava's arms. The intense pain quickly left him speechless, only his limbs convulsing in futile resistance. Yet, the woman's gentle arms were unprecedentedly strong, making his last struggles futile. In just a moment, the severe lack of oxygen and blood left his mind blank, his entire body weak, a relaxed smile on his face. Then, just like a snake, he softly died in the arms of the Serpent Priestess.

"...Really dead... Ah! So sad..."

The Serpent Priestess reached out her hand, feeling no breath from the man, she sighed and released her embrace. She stood slowly, gazing at the Great Sun Chief laying dead, his eyes unclosed, showing neither joy nor sorrow on her face. After a while, she shook her head and looked toward the corner of the temple at Ozli, the Chieftain of the Sacrificial Lake tribe, who wore a face of horror.

"Miyava! You... you killed Qiqini?! You? What is this?..."

At this moment, Chieftain Ozli's eyes widened, watching the graceful and enchanting Serpent Priestess, no longer holding any desire. His tall and strong body trembled slightly, like a porcupine being stared down by a venomous snake, his heart was filled with fear.

"I... I agree to you becoming the chieftain of the Golden Bay tribes!..."

"Ozli, it wasn't me who acted just now!"

The Serpent Priestess Miyava flashed a charming smile, licking her tempting red lips, shaking her head lightly with a smile.

"It was your dagger, it was you! ... It was you who wanted to abandon the tribal warriors and flee with the fleet. And the Great Sun Chief, unwilling to leave the Golden Bay tribes, was cruelly killed by you at the chieftains' meeting... And I, to save the tribes, to avenge my brother... that's why I killed you, imprisoned the chieftains, and was forced to surrender to the Mexica..."

"Avenge Qiqini? Forced to surrender to the Mexica?"

Upon hearing this, Chieftain Ozli's mind went blank, utterly bewildered, even his fingers began to tremble. He couldn't disentangle his thoughts, only hearing a phrase echoing in his ears.

"Kill me?..."

"Kill him!"

The Serpent Priestess Miyava cast a sharp glance at Head Warrior Qiyán, who was clutching Qiqini's body, crying mournfully, and gave a stern order.

"Qiyán! He killed Chief Qiqini. Go kill him, avenge the chief!"

The Serpent Priestess eyed Head Warrior Qiyán, her eyes glinting with dangerous light. Qiyán's earlier hesitation and guilt sparked a new killing intent within her. The current command was a submission training, a sort of mental indoctrination. Only Head Warrior Qiyán, by accepting the 'truth' she uttered, could survive this conspiracy!

Upon hearing the order, Qiyán raised his head, his eyes red, staring blankly at the Serpent Priestess.

"Did... Chief Ozli kill the Family Head?"

"Yes! He killed my brother, using his inherited dagger."

Miyava gently coaxed, her demeanor soft. Her voice carried a peculiar tone, akin to the teachings of a priest.

"Remember! It was Ozli, not us..."

"I remember. It was Ozli, not us..."

Head Warrior Qiyang muttered, lowering his head, once again looking at the dagger in Qiqini's chest. His expression slowly twisted into ferocity, like a hunting dog ready to devour its prey.

"Go, kill him!"

"Roar!... Kill you!"

Head Warrior Qiyang let out a roar, drew the red copper battle axe from his waist, and strode towards Chieftain Ozli of the Sacrificial Lake tribe. He paid no heed to the other's feeble resistance, kicking him to the ground with a single blow. Then, the valiant Head Warrior of the Golden Bay, with a high swing of the red copper axe, aimed at Chieftain Ozli's neck, brought it down forcefully!

"Swoosh!"

Chapter 1243: Birth of the Female Chief

The axe rises and falls, warmth sprayed, the pungent smell of blood dispersing in the temple, with each tribe's chieftain prostrate throughout, as if a sacred sacrifice. The statue casts a shadow, the bonfire flickers with orange, the stone hall flows with blood red. Black, yellow, and red together contrast the center, where the fair-skinned Serpent Priestess's smile on her face shines even more beautifully.

"Miyava... Chieftain... for the Family Head, I have avenged!"

Head Warrior Qiyang, covered in blood, holds the head of Chieftain Ozli from the Sacrificial Lake Tribe, approaching the Serpent Priestess. Then, he kneels on one knee, raising the head high, presenting it to the sole victor.

"Very good! Ancestors witness! The new Chief Divine will forgive all of your deeds!"

Serpent Priestess Miyava nods satisfactorily, extending her white hands to receive Ozli's head. She caresses Ozli's youthful cheek, slightly pondering, then gently closes the terrifyingly wide-open eyes.

"Ah! Such a handsome head!... Let's borrow it for now!..."

The Serpent Priestess murmurs softly and then becomes solemn. She looks at Head Warrior Qiyang, for the first time ordering with a chieftain's tone.

"Qiyang, pledge allegiance to me!"

"Ancestors and Divine witness! Chieftain Miyava, I will guard by your side, fight for you, and die for you!"

"Very good! I accept your pledge and will grant you the power and rewards you deserve!"

The Serpent Priestess shows a stern countenance, extending a blood-red hand, grasping the opponent's hair. She does not believe in oaths but needs the allegiance ceremony to strengthen habitual obedience.

"Go! Invite all the trusted aides prepared by my elder brother!"

"Yes! As you command!"

Head Warrior Qiyang purses his lips and strides away.

Within the temple, only the Serpent Priestess holding the head remains. She does not look at the dead Qiqini or the fainted chieftains from each tribe. She merely holds the head solemnly, step by step, walks to the tall statue of Feathered Serpent Divine, bows, and offers the head on the Divine Platform.

"Esteemed Feathered Serpent Divine! This is your Priestess, offering you the final sacrifice and the last tribute!... After the Mexica people enter the city, I will personally topple your idol and completely convert faith to the Chief Divine!... Please forgive me! No forgiveness is no matter.... After all, I never thought, I could reach the beautiful Divine Kingdom after death..."

After speaking, the Serpent Priestess smiles charmingly, looking up, directly facing the eyes of the Feathered Serpent Divine. The Divine remains silent, only those turquoise eyes continue to shine with wisdom. The Priestess and the Divine thus silently gaze at each other, until a commotion outside the hall quickly arises with dozens of Golden Bay Warriors pouring in, exclaiming incredulously from the mouths of these trusted aides.

"What! The Family Head... is dead?!"

"Chieftain! How did the chieftain die?"

"Feathered Serpent Divine! What exactly happened?"

"We were guarding outside the hall, why weren't we called in time?"

Facing the trusted aides' interrogation, Head Warrior Qiyan gritted his teeth, his face filled with solemn sorrow. He spoke with difficulty, softly saying a sentence.

"It was Chieftain of the Sacrificial Lake, who assassinated the Family Head... I have avenged the Family Head..."

"Damn it! As the Family Head's trusted aide, how could you let such a thing happen!"

"Wasn't the drug administered? How could he still move?!..."

"You should commit suicide, follow the chieftain in departure!..."

"Silence! The Divine is watching you! All shut up!!"

Amidst the commotion, a loud, authoritative command suddenly erupts within the temple! Though the voice is female, the majestic tone and style closely resemble the deceased Great Sun Chief. Upon hearing it, everyone pauses with astonishment.

Miyava, the Serpent Priestess, stands solemnly before the statue of Feathered Serpent Divine, atop the high Divine Platform. In one hand, she holds Ozli's head high; in the other, she raises the sacrificial dagger, as in a sacred offering ceremony. In this moment, her face bears unseen coldness, causing the crowd to tremble in awe.

"Holy Feathered Serpent Divine, witness my words! Chieftain Ozli from the Sacrificial Lake was very cautious and drank little blood wine! He pretended to be drugged, then suddenly ambushed, assassinating my elder brother! Subsequently, I killed the Chieftain of the Sacrificial Lake Tribe, avenging my elder brother, offering him as a sacrifice to the Divine!"

"Exalted Ancestors, grant me the honor of inheritance! I am the revered Serpent Priestess, inheriting the Divinity of the Great Mother Serpent, also possessing the Ancestor Divine Descendant's bloodline! My elder brother had a major task related to the survival of the Golden Bay Tribes! As he is unfortunately deceased, now it falls upon me to temporarily assume the chieftain position of the tribe!"

"Ah! What? You are taking over the chieftain position?..."

"I personally embarked on a mission, met with the Mexica prince, pledged allegiance to him, and gained his promise to protect our tribes! You must follow me to save the Golden Bay tribes! A great event is imminent and action is at hand. Who among you defies me?!"

Upon hearing this, the trusted aides looked at each other, momentarily speechless. They were trusted aides of the Great Sun Chief and controlled the samurai of the Golden Bay tribes, holding the core military power under the chieftain. Now the chieftain is dead, and the succession of the new chieftain cannot proceed without their endorsement. Indeed, the status of the Serpent Priestess is esteemed, and Miyawa, possessing Divine Bloodline, does have the qualification to inherit the tribe. Yet...

"According to tribal tradition, the position of chieftain should be elected by the Council of Elders, selecting a valiant Divine Warrior!"

The elder Guard Commander Qiyu stood out, voicing his opposition.

"Miyawa, although Chieftain Qiqini has passed, the tribe still has several of Divine Bloodline remaining! Like the chieftain's battle-skilled nephew, Yilwei!"

"Oh? Yilwei? He is indeed valiant in battle. But, is his valor enough to lead you in resisting the Mexica military, resisting the divine punishment of thunder?"

The Serpent Priestess Miyawa descended with a cold demeanor from the Divine Platform. Approaching Guard Commander Qiyu, she stared directly into his eyes and asked sharply.

"Or has he met with the Mexica prince, received promises of surrender, and can protect the tribes?"

"Uh... this...."

Faced with the Serpent Priestess's pressing question, Guard Commander Qiyu furrowed his brows, struggling to answer. The Serpent Priestess had always been known for her allure; he had never seen such authoritative posture akin to a chieftain from her before. After several breaths, he slightly avoided her piercing gaze, opting not to respond.

"Miyawa! Regardless, the tribe has not seen a female chieftain for hundreds of years! Moreover, Chieftain Qiqini's death remains unsolved. At this time, Yilwei is more suitable than you!"

"Oh? Is it because Yilwei has always been close to you, making him more suitable?"

"Ah? Witness by the Divine! My heart is pure red, without darkness!"

"Hmm... is that so!..."

Hearing this, the Serpent Priestess nodded slightly, letting her hands fall as if signaling a willingness to compromise. However, in the next moment, her expression hardened, and her right hand wielded the obsidian dagger swiftly and precisely, cutting across Guard Commander Qiyu's neck.

"Slit!..."

"Eh?! Oh! Oh!..."

A look of disbelief and astonishment instantly crossed Guard Commander Qiyu's face. His mouth gaped open, as pressure released, scarlet spurted from the neck's opening with a "slit," splattering all over Miyawa's body and face. In the end, he could say nothing, just keeping his eyes wide open, spurting warm vitality, and fell down with a "thud."

"Witness by the Divine! I will personally perform a sacrifice, cutting open your heart to see if it's red or dark!"

Serpent Priestess Miyawa extended her pure hand, calmly wiping the blood off her face, as if she had killed a noisy crow. Then, she gazed coldly upon the crowd, solemnly declaring.

"Mother of the great serpent Miyawakotel, together with the Sun's warrior, gave birth to the ancestor of the Totonac people! I carry the name of the great serpent mother, as well as inherit His Divinity! The Golden Bay tribes have been passed down among males, with the Sun Warriors ruling the tribes, yet through hundreds of years of slaying, bringing the entire tribe to the brink of the Black Abyss!"

"Now, the Mexica have unified the Highlands; like a charging wolf pack, they are sweeping across the world! It is an unprecedented new era, a time when seaside hurricanes strike! If we stubbornly resist with tribal force, survival in the hurricane is utterly impossible!"

"Thus, only with the wisdom, planning, and flexibility of the serpent mother, only through me! Can you survive, preserve the tribes, even allow the tribes to thrive!... Now, are there any among you who still defy?!"

Within the ancient temple, a silence and dead calm prevailed. Many trusted aides remained mute, watching Miyawa with blood-stained ritual robes and a head in hand. Their gazes gradually shifted. Moments later, Head Warrior Qiyuan was the first to kneel before Miyawa, respectfully paying homage.

"Witness by the Ancestors! Honored Serpent Mother Chieftain! I pledge allegiance to you, to fight for you, to die for you!"

"Witness by the Feathered Serpent Divine! Serpent Mother Chieftain, allegiance to you!"

"You are the new chieftain! We follow you!..."

As the tide turned, dozens of trusted aides gradually knelt, saluting the standing Miyawa. The newly appointed Serpent Mother Chieftain then stepped through the hall filled with blood, returning to the Divine Platform. She gazed upon the crouching aides and chieftains, standing alongside the Feathered Serpent Divine statue, with a slight upward curve to her lips. Her gaze, through the blowing wind, turned towards the dark West. A few dozen miles westward lay the camp of the Mexica's Commander-in-Chief.

In a never-before-seen change within the tribes, leveraging the intimidation of the Mexica forces, she had finally transformed from the Serpent Priestess coveted by many, into the Serpent Mother Chieftain with tribal control, embarking on the long-coveted path of power!

"Oh Feathered Serpent Divine, you witness everything! From today, I am the Serpent Mother Chieftain wielding tribe control, Miyawakotel! I will follow the path of the serpent mother, master the hearts of the tribes, obey those who challenge me, and give birth to the kings of the Totonac tribes!..."

"O mighty Death God above! As long as He can grant me power, I will loyally follow Him... Hee hee! This thousand miles of coastline, five hundred miles deep jungle, ruling millions within the Totonac tribes can't be achieved by mere force alone!..."

Chapter 1244: The Royal Army Enters the City

The darkness silently enveloped the earth, while the shadow of death spread quietly in the depths of that darkness. In Golden Bay City, the prayers of the sacrificial ceremony had ended. At the final celebratory feast, the Golden Bay tribe generously opened their stores, offering unlimited supplies of their treasured brewed wine. Many leaders of the Eastern tribes drank until they were utterly drunk.

After all, the chieftains of each tribe were drinking and making merry in the sacred temple, unwilling to return to camp. The middle-level tribal leaders indulged in a few more drinks; what did it matter? The Mexica's thunder was so terrifying that even the sturdy Golden Bay City seemed on the verge of

collapse. No one knew how much longer this ancient Totonac city-state could hold, so they might as well take it day by day!

This seemed to be a revelry in despair, yet despair arrived sooner than most anticipated. Under the cover of night, one by one, trusted envoy messengers darted out from the Temple of the Feathered Serpent. Meanwhile, teams of Golden Bay Samurai were aimlessly mobilized. The warriors of the Golden Bay controlled various temple fortresses, blocking roads connecting the stationed forces of various tribes, and took over the defense of the West City.

As dawn approached, the morning light brightened the horizon, flickering like candle flames. At the same time, glimmers appeared outside the West City. Under the faint morning light, thousands of Mexica elites, clad in dark green war armor, silently approached the city-state like a pack of wolves escorting the sun. They stared sternly, clutching bronze axes and copper spears, with greatbows slung on their backs, ready for combat!

"Ah! It's—it's the Aztec demon!"

The tribal scout on the lookout atop Golden Bay City was the first to cry out in alarm. The defending army on the city wall looked over in surprise, a bit panicked. They rushed to the stone-throwers and lime pots, preparing for battle, yet heard a sharp command issued from the mouth of the Head Warrior, Qiyan.

"No! This is the king's army of the Mexica! They will accept our surrender, preserve the Golden Bay Tribes, and suppress the greedy Eastern alliance... Open the city gates! Welcome the king's army into the city!"

"What! Open the city gates?! Is this the chieftain's order?"

"This is the Serpent Mother Chieftain's order!"

"Serpent Mother Chieftain? Who is he?... And where is the Great Sun Chief?..."

Upon hearing such an order, the warriors of Golden Bay were shocked, somewhat at a loss, and even began to shout in confusion. They looked towards the tribe leaders, the chieftain's trusted aides who

commanded the warriors, but though these middle-level tribal officers had complex expressions, they said nothing. A few moments later, the same order came from the mouths of those officers.

"The Serpent Mother Chieftain commands! Open the city gates! Welcome the alliance's king's army into the city!"

Outside the West City, Black Wolf Torc squinted, observing the chaos on the city wall, with an expression of murderous intent and a heart full of the desire for conquest.

He personally led four thousand elites to the base of the city, and there was no shooting from the city wall. It seemed that the agreement for surrender was indeed true! Among the four thousand warriors behind him, as many as two thousand wore heavy armor, a force that could not be shaken! As long as the legion entered the city and grasped control of the gates... no matter what disputes or plots the Totonac people had, they would be like ants beneath the feet of giants, with no room for resistance!

"Cre...ak!..."

After a moment of chaos and dispute, the city gate of the West City finally burst open with a "bang"! The once solid Golden Bay City finally appeared as a turtle shedding its shell, becoming a delicious feast for the Mexica wolves to enjoy!

"Praise the Chief Divine! The army enters the city!"

Low cheers echoed from the mouths of four thousand Mexica warriors. Then, in the rising sunlight, the armored legion warriors swarmed in like a tide of dark green. Immediately, they ascended the city walls of the West City, forcibly disarmed the defending soldiers, and securely controlled the city gates in their hands!

"I am Qiyan, the Head Warrior under the Golden Bay Chieftain! I demand to see your legion's commander!..."

Black Wolf Torc climbed the city walls, hearing the urgent cries come from the disarmed captives. He merely cast a glance and put it aside temporarily, giving orders to his trusted aides.

"The Chief Divine protects us! Everything has gone smoothly with entering the city! Have two thousand imperial heavy-armored guards control the inside and outside of the city gates, firmly guarding this entrance! No matter which Totonac army approaches, do not let them come near!"

"Yes! Black Wolf Legion Commander!"

"Wuta, take a team of scouts and report to His Highness in the main camp! At the same time, summon the prepared legion of tens of thousands and let the kingdom's main forces swiftly enter the city!"

"Yes, chief!"

The red-haired scout Wuta bowed and then dashed swiftly towards the west.

"The remaining two thousand red-haired hunters will follow me to find the chieftains of each tribe within the city and seize control for the alliance!"

"Yes! Black Wolf Great Chief!"

After giving his commands, Black Wolf Torc turned to look at the captured defending soldiers on the city wall. He waved his hand, and two red-haired trusted aides brought the disarmed Head Warrior Qiyan before him.

"Honorable Mexica commander! I am Qiyan, the Head Warrior under the Golden Bay Chieftain! The Golden Bay Tribes wish to surrender to the alliance, for which we have received a promise from His Highness of the Mexica! We are allies of the Mexica legion..."

"I am the Kingdom Legion Commander, Black Wolf Torc!"

Black Wolf raised his brow, and his eyes filled with murderous intent, upon which Qiyan was momentarily silenced, a chill running through his heart. The Black Wolf Army had been on the eastern campaign for nearly two years, destroying cities and states, sacrificing divine descendants, slaying many. The illustrious reputation of the "Black Wolf" Great Chief was almost synonymous with the invincible black abyss demon in the hearts of all Totonac tribes.

"The prince specifically wants the chieftains of the Eastern tribes—have you secured them all?"

"Honorable Black Wolf Great Chief, the chieftains of each tribe have been controlled and are being held in the temple. However, they still have legions numbering in the tens of thousands. We lack sufficient forces to suppress them; we have only blockaded the roads..."

"Take me to see your chieftain, Qiqini! Then hand over the chieftains of the Eastern tribes to my trusted aides!"

Black Wolf waved his hand broadly, giving a stern order that allowed no objections.

"The main forces of the kingdom will arrive soon! In a direct clash, the Eastern Allied Forces are nothing worth mentioning!... You, come with me now, and bring me to Qiqini!"

"...Uh..."

"Hmm? What, are you unwilling?"

The Head Warrior Qiyen was momentarily speechless. He paused, carefully speaking under Black Wolf's dangerous and murderous gaze.

"Honorable Black Wolf Great Chief... the Great Sun Chief Qiqini has already been assassinated by the Tribe Chief Ozli of the Sacrificial Lake..."

"Qiqini, he's dead?!"

Black Wolf Torc frowned, recalling the tribal chieftain who had many times met his gaze on the city wall, genuinely surprised.

He led his legion, confronting the opponent beneath Golden Bay City for nearly a year, never able to break through. Though Black Wolf was always proud, he had to admit that this was a tough Great Chief,

a worthy opponent! And later, the opponent's envoy to His Highness sought timely surrender, which made him rather pleased, planning to properly tame him into a leading wolf under his command! However...

"Qiqini opposed the alliance for several years, summoned reinforcements from various Eastern tribes, only to betray them and personally orchestrate a surrender... How could he have plotted so much and then died so quietly?!"

Black Wolf narrowed his eyes, keenly sensing the scent of conspiracy. But since the legion had already entered the city, it didn't matter if the opponent was dead. And the surrender terms once negotiated with Qiqini might now need some alteration...

"Who now controls the Golden Bay tribe, the city-state?"

"Honorable Black Wolf Great Chief..."

The Head Warrior Qiyan slightly lowered his head, respectfully answering.

"Now controlling Golden Bay City is the emissary who visited the Death God and pledged allegiance, personally receiving His Highness's promise... Serpent Mother Chieftain Miyawakotel!"

Hearing this, Black Wolf Torc showed surprise on his face for the first time. He widened his eyes, looking incredulously at Qiyan.

"Serpent Mother? Miyawakotel? Such a name—could it be... she is a woman?!"

"You forty thousand Golden Bay Tribes, so many divine warrior descendants, at this moment of life and death, actually allowed a woman to become chieftain? And over twenty thousand allied troops of various tribes were also toyed with in her hands?"

"..."

The Head Warrior Qiyān lowered his head, remaining silent. But the expression on his face said it all.

"Ha! Truly as brave as the sun, these Totonac people!"

Black Wolf watched him for a while, sneered, and then summoned his trusted aide, Chabo, giving a low-voiced command.

"Go! Relay this new information to His Highness as well!"

Afterward, Black Wolf gave Qiyān a deep look and ordered in a serious tone.

"Lead the way! Let me see what kind of person this Serpent Mother Chieftain really is!"

Chapter 1245: The Burning Temple, The Conquered Golden Bay City!

The golden sunrise rose from the horizon in the East. The Mexica Alliance's army, however, surged in from the city's western gates. The emerald green tide flowed continuously, and in just half a day, the vanguard of four thousand became the main force of over ten thousand troops. Soon, the entire expanse of Golden Bay City was submerged in an irresistible tide!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Punish the rebels! Praise His Highness! Invincible in battle!"

The alliance warriors donned armor and carried weapons, full of deadly intent. Chanting the name of the Chief Divine, under the guidance of the Golden Bay tribes' warriors, they quickly divided into battalion camps of a thousand warriors each, attacking the scattered allied forces within the city.

Seeing the sudden appearance of the Mexica legion, the Totonac tribespeople in the city were shocked and terrified, trembling in their huts. They had not yet returned from yesterday's festival celebrations and were unprepared to directly face the descent of the Chief Divine!

The twenty thousand Eastern allied forces in the city, stripped of their leader and suddenly attacked, were surrounded and divided in various camps. They were paralyzed with shock and could barely organize any effective resistance. They were bombarded with relentless showers of arrows, their

defenses broken by squads wielding bronze axes, and then impaled upon long spears, one by one breaking through their defenses!

The emerald green tide surged like waves; the various allied camps were like sand dunes on the beach, vanishing after just a moment. Soon, only scattered, lifeless bodies remained throughout the city, with large swathes of fresh bloodstains. The dying screams echoed throughout the city-state. Squad after squad, tens of thousands of captured allied forces, with terror and bewilderment, were herded out of the city by the warriors, awaiting judgment between life and death.

From dawn to dusk, the brutal purge within the city lasted an entire day. The blood of the Totonac Eastern factions permeated the ancient city-state with an incomprehensible stench of blood. As the cold sunset dipped into the western highlands, the crimson clouds in the sky were as blood-red and magnificent, contrasting with the vividness on the ground like a red lotus flower coexisting between heaven and earth.

The ancient Golden Bay City was lifted up amidst the flourishing red lotus. And the petals of the red lotus stood as lofty, time-worn temples. Among the many petals of temples, the most splendid and intense was the ancient temple of the Thunder God in the eastern part of Golden Bay City. The remnants of the Eastern allied tribal chieftains, along with seven to eight hundred last personal guard warriors, fled into this sacred temple that had stood for hundreds of years.

The ancient Thunder God, originating from the Olmec Era, was one of the oldest divine beliefs of the Totonac people, even preceding the Feathered Serpent divine. The Mexica War God controlled the divine spear of thunder, conflicting with the divine duties of the ancient Thunder God. Even in the era of Montezuma, the Predecessor Monarch, when he first conquered the seashore, the alliance absorbed the Feathered Serpent but did not retain the ancient Thunder God's faith. Thus, in the western Totonac factions and among the traditional city-states allied with the alliance, this ancient belief had gradually vanished over decades of Mexica conquest! The only ones retaining this belief were the various clans of Golden Bay and the more eastern Totonac tribes.

It was for this reason that, at this critical moment of life and death for Golden Bay City with the entrance of the Mexica army, the priests of the Thunder God Temple opened the temple doors, accepting the last of the tribal chieftains and warriors. These Thunder God priests resisted the Mexica legion more vehemently than the tribal chieftains themselves, even at the cost of their lives!

"Despicable Golden Bay tribes, vile Great Sun Chieftain! We have traversed hundreds of miles, sparing no cost, to rescue you! Yet you opened the city gates and surrendered, selling us out to the Aztec evil

demons! The exalted Sun and Feathered Serpent will mete out divine punishment, casting you into the bottomless Black Abyss!"

Several hundred Eastern allied Totonac warriors, relying on the twenty-meter-high temple pyramid, resisted and struggled desperately. They looked at the Golden Bay warriors leading the Mexica and screamed furiously, their anger filled with terrified despair.

"Aztecs fall into the abyss, colluding with volcanic demons beneath the earth, using the evil power of death! Like the sudden rise and fall of Teotihuacan, they too will eventually be forsaken by all gods!"

At first, the shouts of the allied warriors did not move many Golden Bay warriors. Wars and turmoil among the tribes had raged for hundreds of years. Betrayal and slaughter between each other, for the sake of preserving one's tribe, were commonplace. But when the revered Thunder God priests, wearing Chager Bird feather crowns, stood atop the pyramid, raising their inherited divine staffs, and chastised loudly... the leading Golden Bay warriors bowed their heads in fear and unease.

"Foolish tribal warriors! Betraying the ancient divines and following the Western evil god is a sin that signifies the fall of your soul! This sin will accompany you for life! Not even death can free your soul!..."

"Huh? What are those frail old men on the pyramid shouting about?"

Red Deer Masate, leading a few hundred Red Hair Hunters, widened his eyes and looked at the Thunder God priests on the pyramid, asking in confusion.

"He just yelled a few words, and already so many surrendered Totonac troops have dropped their weapons?"

The Golden Bay trusted aides leading the way bowed their heads, remaining silent. Only the warriors of Five Mountains City, who had surrendered earlier and were granted land, explained reverently in broken Mexica language.

"The priests are saying that if we follow the evil god, our souls will fall into the Black Abyss after death..."

"What? Following the evil god? Soul damnation after death?"

Hearing this, Red Deer Masate's eyebrows rose, his face showing disdain.

"The God of Death, the Great Chief, can summon thunder, invincible in battle, and is the mightiest divine in the mortal realm! When people die, nothing remains, and the soul becomes dust in the wind while the body returns to the Earth Mother Goddess, nurturing new life!"

The faith of the Wilderness Dog Descendants was always so simple and practical. They followed the Black Wolf Great Chief and the God of Death Great Chief, not out of some unfounded divinity, but out of loyalty to powerful military might, fighting for better survival. The dying declarations and curses of these priests could not shake the spirits of the Dog Descendant Warriors in the slightest because that was not the law of the wilderness. And any tribe that did not adhere to the law of the wilderness could not have survived to this day.

"Ha! Truly such weak Seaside Tribes, as weak as the Southern Tribes!"

The Red Deer Masat looked around, observing the hesitant and wavering surrendered army, realizing he could not depend on them. He shook his head; the power of the kingdom in the Seaside Lands, both in faith and military force, was still too weak. The number of surrendered Totonac people was too large, and the ancient traditions and beliefs of the Seaside Tribes still ruled the hearts of these tribespeople. It could not be abruptly changed in a short time.

"The power of Thunder descends from the heaven of divinity, inevitably changing the red world! On the wilderness, hunters follow the strong, with Thunder, hurricanes, and fire, hunting down the scattered bison and herds of deer... And all the decaying deadwood should burn early, turning into the vitality of sprouting new buds!..."

Red Deer Masat stroked his chin, looking at the hunters around him, reciting an ancient yet new sacrificial poem. This sacrificial poem was exactly what the understanding wilderness priests, after advanced study in the kingdom's Divine Power University, returned to their tribes to recompile. The purpose of these poems was only one: to teach the warriors of the wilderness to follow the guidance of heaven and earth, to fight for the kingdom and His Highness, and to conquer all tribes in the world!

"The Red-Haired Hunters, aim at those old priests on the pyramids, shoot them to death!"

"Yes, Chief!"

Hundreds of Red-Haired Hunters responded in unison! They held longbows, closing in on the Pyramid Temple, and then with slight aiming, launched fierce arrows!

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

"Thud!"

The precise copper arrows shot out, and the long feather crowns suddenly turned chaotic, falling in disarray. The cries of the old priests stopped abruptly, their bodies in ritual robes fell heavily to the ground. The stark and warm evening glow was vividly red in the last sunlight. Then, in the horrified gaze of the Totonac surrendered army, an even more ruthless order came from the Dog Descendant Camp Commander's mouth, like the cold highland wind.

"Witness the Chief Divine! Prepare gunpowder arrows, ignite the entire temple! Since they want to resist stubbornly, let them burn with the decaying wood of the past into the firelight of a new day!"

"Yes, Chief! Praise the mighty Chief Divine!"

The sunset gradually waned, and the sky turned into deep dark red. Under the dim sky, gold-red flames rose like a fiery serpent, quickly climbing up the towering pyramid. The dimmer the sky became, the brighter the flames, like stamens lit on a dark red lotus, dancing at the edge of the coast. Viewed in the dark, the flames looked like candles in the boundless netherworld, leading to the world of death beneath!

The burning Pyramid Temple symbolized the most thorough conquest by the Mexica, while the struggling, wailing human figures in the flames were the last vibrant scene in this curtain call, deeply imprinted in the hearts of tens of thousands of Totonac tribespeople.

"Tsk ts! Red sky, dark sea, the brightly burning Pyramid Temple... truly an unforgettable conquest!"

Black Wolf Torc clad in armor, striding with a bronze longsword, stood atop the Feathered Serpent Divine's pyramid. Behind him, over a hundred armored, ax-wielding trusted aides firmly controlled and occupied the crucial points of the entire temple. Under the protection of the trusted aides, he listened to the dirge of death, watched the curtain fall amidst darkness and fire, his lips gradually curling into a serene smile.

Until complete darkness descended, the scorching flames engulfed the entire temple, and a faint smell of gunpowder filled the air, did the cold Black Wolf Commander-in-Chief finally turn around, looking mercilessly at those nearby, his eyes filled with predatory intent like that of a wolf.

Beside the Black Wolf, a young and delicate figure, wearing a feather crown symbolizing a chieftain, stood alone. She tried her best to stand tall, bowing her head without a word, though her body trembled slightly. Further away, dozens of Golden Bay Tribe's trusted aides were all disarmed and knelt under the long spears of the Dog Descendant Warriors. Several who dared to resist had already been stabbed to death on the spot, becoming cold corpses.

Black Wolf Torc, with interest, used his cold and clear eyes to stare at the beautiful Miyava for a while. The gaze of the Black Wolf was filled with undisguised desire, but it was not the desire for man and woman Miyava was familiar with; instead, it was a kind of chilling desire for hunting and slaughter by a beast. It seemed that in the eyes of the other, she was not the most beautiful woman of the tribe, but a beautiful deer, or perhaps a bright chicken, worthy of being hunted, with antlers and feathers to be collected...

"Ha! Serpent Mother Chieftain, on account of your surrendering the city, I will give you one last chance!"

"Surrender all the chieftains taken as prisoners, surrender the jurisdiction of the Golden Bay Warriors, and surrender the two Central Temples of the Sun and the Feathered Serpent, waiting for His Highness's disposition!"

"Witness the Chief Divine! This is not a negotiation of the kingdom, but a command of the kingdom!"

Chapter 1246: Ants on the Pyramid

The flames of the Thunder God Temple burned under the dark sky, like a torch in the hand of a giant, magnificent and soaring. The flames blazed brightly, consuming everything. Soon, all the screams of the end turned into black dust like the night, disappearing into the long wind by the seaside.

In this splendid night, the towering Feathered Serpent pyramid at the center of the City-State was the most outstanding "viewing platform," allowing one to see the fireworks of the old days effortlessly.

At this moment, the two observers on the "viewing platform" were the rulers of Golden Bay City, the scribes of the City-State's destiny. However, Miyava, having exerted herself and enduring for a long time, finally wrote the beginning of destiny but could not control the process. And now, under the cold gaze of Black Wolf Torc, she could barely hold the brush that wrote her tribal authority.

"Honorable Black Wolf Commander, the chieftains of the Eastern prisoners are detained in the underground black cells... Yoltzin, the chieftain of Conical House City, Mayakun, the chieftain of Coyote City, Teotlara, the chieftain of Ke Shi City, Toqina, the chieftain of Rabbit Hill City, Telako, the chieftain of Grass Altar City... These important City-State chiefdoms are being held separately and carefully monitored by my trusted aides. They can be handed over to you tomorrow..."

Serpent Mother Chieftain Miyava was pitiful and full of obedience and submission on her face. She bowed her head deeply in salute, exposing a snow-white neck and an equally fluctuating fullness. However, Black Wolf remained indifferent to her subtle allure and coldly commanded.

"Do not wait until tomorrow; hand them over to my trusted aide now! Otherwise, I'll have your trusted aide take me there. Anyone unwilling will be executed!"

"Honorable Black Wolf Commander, as per your will... But..."

Upon hearing this, Serpent Mother Chieftain Miyava hung her head, displaying a feeble posture. She was just about to say something, but Black Wolf interrupted unmercifully.

"Also, where is Qiqini's body? Hand it over to me!"

"Ah? My brother's body? It's underground in the temple, ready to be buried..."

The sudden request brought a halt to the expression on Serpent Mother Chieftain Miyava's face. She carefully scrutinized Black Wolf's gaze, trying to discern if he had any hidden intentions.

"Honorable Black Wolf Commander, why do you want my brother's body? According to the Tototanak people's customs, his remains will be buried beneath the temple, along with past chieftains..."

"Hmm... Although Qiqini died inexplicably, he managed to lead the Allied Forces, blocking me for a year. Indeed a worthy adversary!"

Upon saying this, Black Wolf Torc deeply regarded Miyava with a glance and spoke faintly.

"We Mexica Warriors always respect brave warriors and worthy opponents! His body can be buried in the temple as per custom. However, you must give me his head as a precious collection!"

"Ah? This!..."

The casual words of Black Wolf fell into Miyava's ears, causing the enchanting Serpent Mother Chieftain to tremble all over. Bowed down, she felt the coldly assessing gaze upon her, as if her own head were becoming a collectible war trophy. Under the threat of death, she silently pondered for a moment before responding softly.

"Yes!... As you command, Black Wolf Commander. I will now instruct my trusted aides to hand over the chieftains and my brother to you... However, the jurisdiction over the tribal warriors mostly lies with the chieftains and elders of various tribes. Even as a chieftain, I do not have the power to strip it away..."

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! Miyava, I am giving you a chance to save your tribes!"

Black Wolf Torc raised his brows, his pure black eyes revealing a cold killing intent once more.

"The Kingdom's army has already entered the city! All surrendered troops in Golden Bay City must lay down their arms and be detained by the Kingdom Legion! Anyone daring to resist will be seen as an enemy of the Kingdom and executed immediately! Golden Bay Warriors who dare to rebel will also face execution!"

"The Chief God Priest accompanying the army is already preparing. Tomorrow morning, the grand conversion ceremony will be held outside the city! All captured Allied Forces must swear a blood oath in front of the Chief God's priest and convert to the Supreme Main God! The warriors of Golden Bay tribes must also participate in the conversion ceremony and pledge to the Chief Divine!"

"This is the judgment of the Chief Divine and the will of His Highness, not to be defied! The Totonac Warriors will be the first to convert, followed by the tens of thousands of tribespeople in the city. Whoever refuses to swear a blood oath, refuses to offer their spirit, refuses to convert to the Chief Divine... regardless of their status and identity, will be sacrificed on the spot!"

Black Wolf's words were full of pure killing intent and determination for slaughter. He never cared how many enemies there were, as long as they were all killed! On his eastward campaign to this point, he had already killed hundreds and thousands of Tototanak Divine Descendants and priests!

Miyava kept her head down, pressing her red lips tightly, staying silent. She listened to Black Wolf's emotionless commands, watching his wolf-like eyes, knowing these threats were not empty.

"Alas!... Sacrifice and slaughter... Kill, kill, kill..."

The enchanting Serpent Mother Chieftain sighed, her face showing bitterness. Faced with the ruthless Black Wolf, she seemed as if she had encountered a predator, like a snake facing a wolf. Black Wolf had neither mercy nor conquest intent, nor any consideration for long-term governance of the tribes, only a pure desire for slaughter. Faced with such pure murderous intent, she could not halt his actions and felt powerless.

"The hurricane by the seaside strikes; since it cannot be stopped, it must be used to one's advantage..."

Silently biting her teeth, Miyava pondered for a moment, her face again showing a gentle smile. She reached into her bosom, bringing out a cotton scroll she had prepared long before, handing it to Black Wolf with both hands.

"Esteemed Black Wolf Chieftain, I will send my trusted aides to assist you in collecting the warriors of the Golden Bay Tribes... and here is the list of the traditionally stubborn Elders who are reluctant to open the city, along with the list of the most determined chieftains resisting the Kingdom's forces..."

The beautiful Serpent Mother Priestess smiled softly, revealing her white teeth.

"These people... are a token of the Golden Bay Tribe's surrender, all handed over to you to dispose of! And I am willing to, in tomorrow's Conversion Ceremony, represent the Golden Bay Tribe as the first to convert to the Chief Divine!"

"Very well!"

The Black Wolf Torc nodded slightly, expressing satisfaction. As he took the cotton book and casually opened it, his expression changed. For the first time, shock appeared on his cold face.

"Huh?! The first line is the pictographic text of the Tototanak tribes, and this second line... Miyava, you actually know the language of the Alliance?! And you can write so much!"

"Honored Black Wolf Commander-in-Chief, I have always been inclined towards the powerful Alliance, and revere the Supreme Main God! The 'Book of Ama Colley' issued by the Alliance years ago, I studied diligently for half a year and can recite the whole thing..."

"What?! Chief Divine as my witness! You only studied for half a year and can recite the entire 'Book of Ama Colley'?... Does His Highness know?..."

Miyava smiled charmingly. However, seeing the sudden intense killing intent on Black Wolf's icy stiff face, she couldn't help but shudder and cautiously replied.

"Uh! Well... Black Wolf Commander-in-Chief, the Alliance's language is very difficult, I only learned a little. As for the Alliance's 'Book of Ama Colley', I studied it for a year, oh no, a year and a half... and only remembered maybe a quarter, no two-thirds..."

"Hmm..."

Hearing Miyava's explanation, the expression of Black Wolf Torc finally eased. He looked at her blankly and ordered without emotion.

"After the Conversion Ceremony, hand over the Sun God and Feathered Serpent Divine temples! The Kingdom wants to tear down the statues of the Fake Gods and erect the emblem of the Chief Divine!"

"Yes!... I will represent the tribe and personally topple the statues of the old gods..."

With her head bowed, Miyava agreed respectfully, her demeanor exceedingly gentle under Black Wolf's icy threat. However, with her obediently downcast eyes, countless thoughts surged in her mind, transforming into a strong desire.

The power of the Golden Bay Tribes had just come into her hands, how could she simply let herself be at the mercy of others and give it away? Yet, to break through the current predicament, she could not begin with the killing intent driven Black Wolf Commander-in-Chief....

The beautiful Serpent Mother Chieftain pondered for a moment, then respectfully proposed before Black Wolf Torc left.

"Honored Black Wolf Chieftain, I have some precious gifts I wish to present to His Supreme Highness..."

"Before the Golden Bay City is purged and secure, His Highness will not enter the city!"

Black Wolf Torc squinted, gauging the graceful and stunning Miyava, and coldly said.

"His Highness's safety is above all! All gifts must go through thorough inspection by His Highness's trusted aides! Serpent Mother Chieftain, you better choose the gifts carefully, if there's anything amiss, I will personally cut off your head!"

"Yes... rest assured..."

Listening to Black Wolf's merciless threat, Miyava nodded respectfully, but her resolve only grew stronger.

"Chief Divine as my witness! My gift will certainly please His Highness..."

"It better be so!"

Black Wolf raised his head, holding the cotton book of death lists, glanced at Miyava momentarily, and led his trusted aides in striding away.

With her head down, Miyava looked at her feet, watching a small ant tirelessly crawling, seemingly searching for a path to the top of the pyramid. Not far away, the blazing fire still burned atop the city's eastern pyramid, and what was the point of the ant's effort?

"Because she doesn't want to be easily crushed dead... she wants to reach the heights, no matter what it takes..."

On this brightly lit night, Serpent Mother Chieftain Miyava murmured to herself, standing atop the Pyramid Temple, gazing into the distance. She watched the city full of fire and smoke, observed the flood of the Mexica legion, as if wanting to imprint everything unforgettable deeply in her memory. Then, she lightly raised her heel and gently lowered it, bringing an abrupt end to the ant's effort.

Chapter 1247: The Blood-Red Great Conversion

The torch of the Thunder God Pyramid Temple burned throughout the entire night and gradually extinguished at dawn. This night, this bright flame was deeply imprinted in the eyes of tens of thousands of Totonac people, leaving a fear carved into their very bones and unforgettable!

However, the terrifying torch did not end there. Under the guidance of the chieftain's trusted aide, the dark green figures moved grimly through the firelight, appearing one after another in the center of the city-state and the residences of various divine descendants, chieftains, and priests. Then, the screams of fear and panic, the brief and intense sounds of killing, echoed throughout the entire city-state, and quickly subsided into silence. Along with them vanished the esteemed tribal leaders and all tribal warriors who dared to resist.

"Thunder falls, flames sweep the mountain forest. Beasts flee, dead wood burns to ashes!... However, in the terrible wildfire, small ants huddle together, hiding deep underground. The outer ants die, charred, but the queen ant survives. She clings tightly to her body, waiting for the fire to pass, waiting for the charred forest filled with food and free of predators..."

Chief Serpent Mother Miyava, wearing a feather crown and a chieftain's short robe, sat cross-legged atop the pyramid, gazing at the flames and destruction below. She was barefoot, her calves exposed, her short robe fluttering, outlining a captivating curve, a sacred smile on her face. The former Serpent Priestess looked upward, her short hair fluttering, feeling the warmth and intensity of the firelight in the night wind. She couldn't help but hug herself, like a girl warming by the fire on a winter night.

The faint light of dawn shot from the eastern sky, reflecting in the woman's slightly raised eyes, brighter than ever before. The long night of fire finally passed, and the solemn chanting of the Chief God Priest began outside the western city gates, gradually resounding through the clouds!

"Praise the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! He is supreme, omnipresent, and omnipotent!..."

"What is this? The Chief God's conversion ceremony?... The Mexica people, they are really impatient..."

On the ancient pyramid, Miyava turned her head to look, a look of surprise on her face. In the western wilderness outside Golden Bay City, a row of newly lit Sacred Fires had already been ignited in the morning sun. The Mexica War Priests, wearing leather armor and carrying bronze axes, raised their hands high, praying to the morning sun. And a Divine Platform five or six meters high had been built overnight, enshrining the Chief God's emblem and wood carving!

At this moment, tens of thousands of Mexica warriors, armored and armed, lined up and gathered in the wilderness, forming a giant circular sacrificial ground. Under the light of dawn, the neatly organized formations represented a reverence and murderous intent the Totonac people had never seen before!

Then, the sound of restless commotion accompanied the escorted allied forces' prisoners, pouring into the circular center surrounded by Mexica warriors, one team after another. Rows of towering long spears shone with bronze's sharp golden light, symbolizing the impending conversion and judgment, rebirth or death!

"Praise the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! He will take away the converts' hair and blood and control the believers' souls! Believers in the divine will receive forgiveness and salvation, ascending to the beautiful Divine Kingdom! Non-believers will face divine punishment and retribution, forever falling into the cold Black Abyss!..."

"Please, come! Supreme Chief Divine! Oh, Huitzilopochtli!..."

The Chief God Priests chanted fervently, passionately calling out the divine name. The Assistant Priests spared no expense in throwing bags of expensive spices and rosin into the burning Sacred Fire!

Soon, faint Divine Smoke rose over the wilderness outside the city. The golden flames and gray smoke shifted and expanded, appearing to the Totonac warriors as volcano demons devouring the earth. Then, these volcano-born demons exhaled sulfurous volcanic breath, suddenly painted in ghostly blue under the horrified gaze of the Totonac people!

"The divine has arrived! It descends from the dawn, appearing in the bluish flames, gazing upon us with majesty!"

In the awe-filled and fearful eyes of tens of thousands of surrendered soldiers, Xiulote, wearing a stone crown and a complex black god robe, ascended the high Divine Platform.

This grand conversion ceremony would convert more than twenty thousand prisoners of the Eastern tribal allied forces and over forty thousand tribespeople of the Golden Bay tribes. This grand conversion includes multiple stages such as praying to the divine, sacrifice, judgment, blood oath, conversion... lasting several days, determining the life and death of seventy thousand people, must be personally presided over by him!

And with his appearance, the fanatical shouts of the Kingdom's Warriors boomed like thunder, instantly silencing all noisy waves.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise His Highness!!... Praise Him! Divinely inspired His Highness! King in the Lake!!..."

Amidst the shocking shouts, Xiulote's expression remained indifferent, head raised, looking towards the East. His solemn gaze paused slightly on the towering pyramid within the city before looking at the newborn sun over the sea and sky.

"The divine has arrived! It transforms into a divine being, casting divine spears, shooting out streaks of lightning!"

With Xiulote's declaration, twenty copper cannons thundered into the sky with a deafening explosion! And under the terrifying thunder, seventy thousand startled Totonac prisoners finally prostrated themselves on the ground, bowing in submission to the inscrutable Mexica divine!

"Thunder explodes, thousands prostrate... that is the powerful God of Death His Highness..."

The Copper Beast roared with thunder, demonstrating an irresistible force to the Totonac people. On the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, the former Serpent Priestess sighed softly. She gazed into the distance, unable to discern the King's expression, but she could see the smoking and booming golden Copper Beast, the neatly guarded devout military corps, and the vast expanse of prostrate ants like the arrival of true divinity.

"The Thunder-summoning Copper Beast, the invincible corps... the powerful King, supreme authority! Ah!..."

Miyava tightened her legs, greedily gazing for a moment, a slight blush suddenly appeared on her face, its thoughts were unknown. After a moment of intoxication, the former Serpent Priestess breathed softly, suppressing all her desires. She bowed her head, bent her body, sincerely saluting the power-holding King from afar, regardless of whether anyone could see.

Subsequently, the Serpent Mother Chieftain, with a solemn expression, adjusted the feather crown on her head, then silently rose and walked down the pyramid. After the blood oath and conversion of more than twenty thousand allied forces, it was the turn for the grand conversion of the Golden Bay Tribes! This was a moment that truly decided life and death, and no matter if there was still half a day or a whole day left, she had to prepare early, daring not to remain seated on the pyramid overlooking the true King.

The spring breeze blew across the tall pyramid, bringing a still unscattered scent of blood. Miyava smelled the scent of blood, wearing her feather crown, taking small steps, walked very slowly. And behind her, a clear announcement echoed as it was relayed by hundreds of Chief God Priests, like a wave gradually rising between the sea and sky, forever etched into her heart!

"The divine has arrived! It guides the souls of the pious believers to the red realm! It says, beneath the red sky, there shall be a red dawn!"

Xiulote's eyes deepened, carrying a faint killing intent, watching over the seventy thousand kneeling Totonac people. He knew that the upcoming pronouncement would be punctuated with blood. But to unify the world, to integrate nations and beliefs, such blood and sacrifice, what does it count for?...

The Kingdom's Warriors cheered, submerging the desert in their eerie silence. Xiulote, his expression indifferent, looked up at the East. His solemn gaze paused briefly at the towering pyramid in the city. And in the trembling silence of tens of thousands, he, unperturbed, shouted the bloody prelude.

"Where the divine eye sees, there shall be blood-red heaven and earth!"

"He says, those who convert to the Chief Divine, shall live! Those unwilling to convert, shall die!"

"The sacred grand conversion, begins now!..."

Chapter 1248: The Newly Established Seaside Diocese and Inquisition

The sacred grand conversion ceremony began in the golden dawn and ended in the blood-red sunset, lasting a full three days. More than sixty thousand Totonac tribespeople cut their hair, drank blood wine, and facing the burning Sacred Fire, took a blood oath to convert to the Supreme Main God!

As a testament to this conversion, tens of thousands of surrendered Totonac troops, under the gaze of the Chief God Priest, tremblingly took up arms and killed more than six thousand priests, samurai, and tribespeople from various groups who were unwilling to take the blood oath and convert to the Chief Divine. This tenth of the blood and carcasses should be the most stubborn and obstinate among the seaside factions. Their complete disappearance and destruction at the hands of their own kind marked the Totonac factions' complete break with their old beliefs!

"Where the divine eyes gaze, the heavens and earth are blood-red! The red dusk passes, and the new dawn brings golden vitality..."

Xiulote stood on the Divine Platform, watching the sacrificial pit filled with fresh corpses being meticulously buried by the Totonac surrendered army. He listened to the Totonac people's weeping, feeling the fear and confusion within it. Then soon, the gentle comforting words of the Chief God Priests rose among the crying crowd, filling the newly desolate hearts of the converts in their moment of collapse.

"The Chief God witnesses! The radiant Chief God spreads the glory of the sun, warming the hearts of the faithful! He forgives the devoted believers, forgives their past sins, and guides them after death to the red kingdom!..."

"Praise the Supreme Main God! He bestows upon us the flame of light, burning away all past sins, and mercifully shelters us! Come! Pray to Him and receive holy forgiveness!..."

Under the persuasive guidance of the Chief God Priests, low prayers gradually emerged from the newly converted Totonac tribespeople.

"Praise the Chief God! We pray to you, ask for your forgiveness!..."

Hearing the prayers of the Totonac, for the first time a smile crept onto Xiulote's stern face. After a brutal baptism, the surviving Totonac tribespeople abandoned their past and, at the cost of blood, finally converted to faith in the Chief Divine.

"Your Highness, they have betrayed everything; only by converting to the Chief God can they achieve redemption! And only such a costly conversion makes those who've given everything unable to turn back, compelling them to sincerely worship the Chief Divine!"

Xiulote lowered his eyes, recalling this insight into human nature, feeling a slight stirring in his heart. He slowly descended from the Divine Platform to the blazing Sacred Fire. The elder Priest who spoke this maxim stood deferentially in a simple robe.

"Praise the Chief God! Divinely inspired Supreme High Priest sir, your loyal follower Yitai greets you!..."

"No need for formalities. Chief Priest Yitai, these past few years, you've excelled in leading the religious tribunal in the kingdom's south, dealing effectively with some stubborn nobles and chieftains..."

Xiulote smiled as he reached out, grasping Yitai's hair. Then, with a meaningful smile, he spoke.

"You must have heard the rumors... I summoned you here all the way from the kingdom's south and formally promoted you to Fourth Level Chief Priest; for what purpose..."

"Yes! Divinely inspired Chief Priest sir, I am willing to serve you to the death!..."

Hearing this, Chief Priest Yitai lowered his head excitedly, hard-pressed to suppress the joy on his face.

"I will heed your command, manage the newly established seaside ecclesiastical province, spread the glory of the Chief Divine, and educate the newly converted believers! I will exercise restraint, not being overly harsh, but will continuously purge the tribes' faith. I will favor the devout, quickly cultivating a batch of devout and trustworthy believers as the foundation of the kingdom's rule!..."

"Hmm, not bad! Very good!..."

The sunset fell, and the sky was filled with red clouds. Xiulote gazed at the seaside sunset, listening to Chief Priest Yitai's mission plans, nodding in satisfaction. Then, without speaking, he inhaled the sweet, metallic sea breeze, gradually turning around to face the now-dark east. Chief Priest Yitai stood by, reading the situation, and remained silent. He patiently accompanied the Divinely inspired Chief Priest, together watching the vast, somber Eastern Sea as it merged into deep endless darkness.

"Across the eastern sea, darkness is approaching... The Totonac coast is the frontline of the Chief Divine's faith, needing swift purification!"

After a long pause, Xiulote finally spoke softly. He watched the composed Chief Priest Yitai, contemplating before finally resolving to further unleash the chains of the fierce tiger.

"As the newly conquered seaside ecclesiastical district, the faith in the Chief Divine is not yet solid. Yitai, I permit you to go one step further and establish an Inquisition! The seaside ecclesiastical district's Inquisition can recruit two thousand people from the loyal Totonac believers who have been tested for the Temple Army! This armed congregation will be equipped with the main army's Leather Armor Bronze Soldiers, and further equipped with five hundred sets of Bronze Cloth Armor!"

"The chieftains, samurai, and priests of the seaside tribes, and even the nobles coming from the Alliance migration can all be directly examined for faith by the Inquisition! And below hereditary nobility and

Great Chiefs, or for groups smaller than fifty, the Inquisition has the authority to judge directly without reporting!"

"What? Establishing a Temple Army of two thousand, all nobles below hereditary nobility can be directly judged?"

Upon hearing the promise, Chief Priest Yitai took a deep breath. He had a fierce reputation among the kingdom's southern nobility but acted with considerable discretion, not conducting wanton trials of the kingdom's upper classes.

However, now it seemed that His Highness intended for him to carry out a major purge of faith in the seaside lands with no reservations! Even granting the power to establish a Temple Army and expand the Church Armed Forces!

"Does this mean... Divinely inspired Supreme High Priest sir, that we must enact strict purgation, deciding everything by faith regardless of status or origin?..."

Chief Priest Yitai licked his dry lips, cautiously seeking confirmation.

"If we truly do this... once a great fire ignites, I may not be able to extinguish it... moreover, there is also the High Priesthood of the Lake Capital City..."

"Yitai, in the next twenty years, throughout the entire seaside land, adherence to the Chief Divine's faith will be the only way!"

Xiulote nodded solemnly to Chief Priest Yitai, affirming him. Then he reached out and lightly patted Yitai's shoulder. The elder Chief Priest trembled all over; his waist instantly bent halfway, as if bearing the weight of a heavy burden.

"I have reported to the High Priesthood to establish the Seaside Ecclesiastical District Inquisition, with you overseeing all religious affairs!..."

"Go all out! The kingdom's eastward expedition continues; start with spreading faith! Hereafter, no matter how many people you judge, as long as I'm here, you'll be protected. Whether Mexica, Vastec, or Totonac, in this thousand miles of seaside land, I want only the devout faith of the Chief Divine! All heresy and idolaters, irrespective of their origin, must burn away in the flames!..."

"Yitai, I entrust you with the missionizing of the seaside lands, the forefront of the Chief Divine faith!..."

Chapter 1249: The Surrendering Chieftains

The fall of Golden Bay City and the surrender of the Western and Eastern Totonac allied forces marked the end of a long decisive battle. As the defeated party, most of the Western Totonac tribes were defeated and surrendered, while the Eastern Totonac tribes lost more than half of their elite and could no longer organize a strong army. From then on, the Kingdom's eastward conquest of the Totonac Coast entered a whole new phase of conquest!

The obstacles of resistance disappeared suddenly, and the Kingdom's legions continued eastward. Black Wolf Torc, unable to wait, personally led a vanguard army of six thousand samurai, taking captured war boats across the wide Adobe River! He has already received a new royal decree to seize the opportunity following the great victory to conquer Conical House City and Coyote City, more than a hundred miles across the Great River.

The howls of the Dog Descendant warriors echoed in the jungle on the east bank of the Great River. The Totonac villages along the shore offered almost no resistance and surrendered to the scouts' squads. Three thousand Dog Descendants paved the way at the forefront, a thousand artillery camp soldiers with two thousand Cempoala defectors transported heavy copper cannons, advancing with difficulty towards Conical House City deep in the jungle.

And in the vanguard army, there was also a group of newly converted chieftains with the Chief Divine emblem imprinted on their foreheads. The war boats, loaded with samurai and supplies, crossed the rushing river. The great chieftain of Conical House City, Yoltzin, and the great chieftain of Coyote City, Forest Wolf Mayakun, both looked grim as they landed on the east bank of the Adobe River under the guard of the Dog Descendant warriors, in the extremely familiar land of Eastern Totonac. At this moment, they stood by the river, looking at each other, gazing at the dark red Sun Hummingbird on each other's foreheads, their expressions somewhat bleak.

"Beyond the river... is the land of Eastern Totonac...."

The great chieftain of Conical House City, Yoltzin, pursed his lips, looking towards the verdant jungle and marsh to the East. He was familiar with this route; a hundred miles further east was his tribe and city fort. Twice, during the battles with the Mexica, he returned to the city-state, bringing warriors of Conical House City along this road to rescue Golden Bay City. However, this return was unprecedentedly difficult, one might even say a betrayal...

"Forest Wolf, are we just going back like this? Bringing the Mexica's army, to persuade the city-state to surrender?"

"What else can we do? Yoltzin, do we even have a choice?"

The great chieftain of Coyote City, Forest Wolf Mayakun, raised his head, revealing a face with a mixture of a smile and a cry. He had eyes as narrow as a wolf's, but lacked the decisiveness of a wolf's fierceness. So, after being captured by the Mexica, he hesitated repeatedly, thinking of suicide several times, but ultimately chose to convert to the Chief Divine and surrender.

"Of course, you could also, like the great chieftain of Grass Altar City, Santu Tlaco, use a sacrificial obsidian dagger to cut your own throat!"

Upon hearing the name Santu Tlaco and thinking of the other's heroic death, Great Chieftain Yoltzin clenched his teeth and reached for the dagger at his waist... However, after a moment, he powerlessly dropped his hand and sighed.

"Ah! Chief Divine, forgive us! Since we did not take our own lives at the time of the blood oath conversion... there is even less need to mention it now... Not to mention, Tlaco's head ultimately became a collection of the Black Wolf's great chieftain..."

"Ha! Chief Divine, forgive us!"

Hearing Yoltzin's prayer, Forest Wolf Mayakun's lips curled as if mocking the other, or mocking himself. After a while, he shook his head, pointed to the tribal army landing behind them, and softly said.

"Yoltzin, facing hurricanes and thunderbolts, surrendering is also helpless. Look, what are those tribal defectors transporting?"

Upon hearing this, Great Chieftain Yoltzin turned his head to look, and immediately felt a chill. He saw more than a dozen golden copper beasts slowly being unloaded from the war boats and placed on oddly shaped wheeled carts. Then, a large group of samurai and militia exerted great effort to transport the golden copper beasts along a dirt road leading east through the forest. And at the end of this dirt road was Conical House City.

"The Mexica's copper beasts, divine punishment of thunderbolts!..."

Great Chieftain Yoltzin mumbled, lost in his thoughts for a moment, then lightly sighed.

"With such divine punishment of thunderbolts, especially those short and stout copper beasts... the tribe simply cannot hold the city-state! The only way for the Seaside Tribes is to escape deep into the forests and engage in guerrilla warfare with the Mexica in the woods!"

"Exactly! Only by hiding deep in the forest can we resist the hurricanes and thunderbolts... But abandoning the city-state and fields, abandoning the old, weak, women, and children, the price of guerrilla warfare is too high..."

Forest Wolf Mayakun nodded and responded in a low voice. He glanced around, noticing that the guarding Dog Descendant warriors were on the outer perimeter, talking to the transport captain, temporarily ignoring this place. In fact, the Dog Descendant warriors came from the wilderness and could not understand the local dialect they deliberately used.

"Yoltzin, let me ask you, are you sincerely surrendering to the Mexica?"

"Uh?"

Upon hearing this, Chieftain Yoltzin's expression froze, revealing some unease on his face. He looked around and then examined Forest Wolf Mayakun's expression before lowering his voice to reply.

"Forest Wolf, before the Mexica arrived, we were the masters of the City-State, the masters of this land! And now, we are just prisoners, domesticated dogs!..."

"Indeed! Yoltzin, how can the Divine Descendant of the Tototanak people willingly submit to the Divine Descendants of the Highland like domestic dogs? The Priests of the Feathered Serpent say that the Mexica are not even Divine Descendants of the Highland, merely barbarians from Aztlan!"

"That's right! The warriors from the Seaside tribes will not sincerely swear allegiance to these highland barbarians! Even if they are strong, they do not possess the divinity of our ancestors... only the honored bloodline of the Sun and the Giant Serpent has the inherent right to rule over the Seaside Lands!..."

The two Chieftains lowered their voices, controlling their excitement, and swiftly exchanged their thoughts. It was not until the Dog Descendant Warriors had already gathered around them that a Red Hair Hunter, looking somewhat impatiently, gripping his Greatbow, walked toward the riverside where the two stood. Only then did Forest Wolf Mayakun lower his head and quickly leave a final warning.

"Yoltzin, for now, we should feign conversion and submit to the Mexica, protecting our tribes as much as possible, and wait for future opportunities!... The hurricane will pass, and the thunderbolt will also dissipate. No matter how strong the Mexica's legions are, they cannot possibly stay in these thousand miles of jungle indefinitely!..."

"Ah! You're right! Feign conversion, await the opportunity... May the Chief Divine bless us!..."

"..."

Just after they spoke the last sentence, Red Hair Hunter Mique carried his Greatbow and came before them. His expression was suspicious, scrutinizing the two Chieftains who kept their heads lowered and compliant. Then, he reached out and unceremoniously patted their cheeks. Only after did he open his eyes wide and, in clumsy Mexica Language, asked.

"Hey! You two, what were you whispering about just now? The leader has ordered, before taking over the City-State, you must not commit suicide!... If you dare to kill yourselves, I'll throw your bodies into the bottomless Volcano and Black Spring, so you won't be able to reach the Divine Kingdom after death!"

"Ah! This?... Brutal Mexica!..."

Upon hearing such threats, both Chieftains shivered simultaneously. In the shared legends of the Highland and Seaside tribes, beneath the volcano crater lies the bottomless Abyss, a dwelling place for demons and evil spirits. Meanwhile, the unique petroleum black spring of the Totonac Coast is also a place in myths that can cause a soul's downfall.

This threat of posthumous soul degradation is even more terrifying for many Seaside warriors and chieftains than having a dagger at their throats!

"Ha! The threats taught by the priests are indeed effective!... However, to be afraid of some soul degradation while being a strong warrior—how odd these Seaside tribes are!"

Seeing the reaction of the two chieftains, Red Hair Hunter Mique smirked, mocking them.

Sometimes, the Canine Descendants of the Wilderness also fear the threat after death. However, it's not due to soul degradation but the fear of being eaten and unable to return to the divine Earth. Nevertheless, the Wilderness lacks the belief in an afterlife; death is final. Returning to Earth merely fulfills the duty to the Earth Mother Goddess, and if one truly cannot return, it's simply unavoidable.

"Let's move! Quick on the road! Persuade the surrender of that Conical House City quickly, so back in camp, we can enjoy a few hot meals! Your surrendered warriors are so numerous, like thousands of chickens, almost eating up all the corn tortillas in camp. The leader plans to take us deeper into the jungle, leaving no time for more supplies. If the City-State lacks food, I'll have no choice but to eat the two of you!..."

Under the Red Hair Hunter's threats, the two former chieftains stumbled upon a familiar path home. The familiar jungle was lush green, with fresh new buds sprouting from treetops. The March spring breeze was reluctant to depart, while the April spring scene lay ahead. Following the May spring planting season would be the long rainy season. And at the peak of the rainy season, nothing could be done.

"The Mexica's legions are hastily advancing..."

In the jungle, Chieftain Yoltzin's footsteps grew steadier as he trudged along. He was familiar with the thick roots in the woods and the treacherous pits in the swamps. Even while walking beneath the dense

canopy of trees that obscured the sun, he could still discern the directions, not getting confused by this green desert.

Thus, having traveled for three days, he had already surpassed several groups of Dog Descendant Warriors, appearing at the forefront of the Vanguard Army. Ahead of him, the jungle suddenly opened up, revealing a City-State atop a small hill to everyone's view. Those pointed wooden huts and thatched huts, those short and thick wooden and stone walls, those familiar faces and figures... everything spelled out a fact that he must confront.

The Conical House City had arrived, his tribe lay ahead. Next was the choice of destiny. To live or die depended on his choice, and also on the people of the City-State.

Chapter 1250: The "Angry" Cardinals, the "Interesting" Gift

In the lowland tropical rainforest, spring always comes earlier than imagined. At the beginning of April, the hues of spring deepen. The season of reproduction arrives amidst the songs of diverse birds.

The red cardinals of America sing with "anger," jubilantly spreading their red and black feathers to attract the dull, grey females. They occupy their respective "treetops," expelling male birds that cross their paths, and even confront their own shadows as competitors for mates, constantly "dueling" with the air.

"Ecatl, the chieftains of the Seaside Tribes, are like these noisy red cardinals. They rack their brains, desperately occupying their respective treetops, yet their vision is limited to the immediate."

Xiulote stood on a small hill, gazing towards the rainforest in the East. The desolate Golden Bay City was right by the northeastern coast, while the vast earth-toned Great River lay at his feet. At this moment, he looked across the river and saw a large group of surrendered soldiers transporting grain, struggling into the verdant jungle, startling a cloud of chasing red birds.

Several hundred Dog Descendant Warriors, heavily armored and equipped, supervised the tribal defector forces transporting supplies. Occasionally, a red-haired hunter scout would deftly pluck a bone arrow, shoot into the sky with precision, and bring down a small bird for roasting.

"These Totonac chieftains always refuse to obediently comply and achieve merit in the kingdom's wars! Only when the mighty army arrives, and hunters draw their bows to shoot, do they realize their insignificance and the impending approach of death!"

A scout arrived from the West, drenched in sweat, delivering the latest report. Xiulote raised his eyebrows, unfolded the urgent report, glanced at it briefly, and his expression turned cold. Then, he handed the report adorned with illustrations to the Guard Commander Ecatl and spoke indifferently.

"In the area near Five Mountains City at the rear, there are several Totonac chieftains opposing the Kingdom, raising rebel forces to harass the army's supply routes."

"Chief Divine protect us! Are there chieftains rebelling at the army's rear?"

Upon hearing this, Guard Commander Ecatl's expression became stern. He took the report, quickly read it, and then relaxed slightly.

"Family Head, these rebellious Totonac chieftains likely come from the Mistec people's territory. When the army advanced eastward, they hid in the Mistec Valley, under the protection of the Cloud People. Now that the army has departed, they're daring to emerge from the mountains like concealed burrowing rats!"

"According to the description in the letter, these rebellious chieftains only command around a thousand tribal warriors. With their strength, they might at most harass small militia teams transporting grain, but they cannot capture any fortresses along the way! As long as we deploy two samurai camps and catch them once, we can defeat them!"

"Hmm. Order Head Warrior Bertade to dispatch more personnel and mobilize two thousand Mexica City-State troops to ensure the supply routes remain open!"

Xiulote nodded and issued the orders in a deep voice. Then, after contemplating briefly, he sternly commanded again.

"Write several royal decrees, rebuking the surrendered Totonac Tribes along the route! Tell them to send men and provide manpower to expel the harassing tribes. Inform them if they continue to shelter

or remain inactive... when the subsequent great army of the Alliance arrives, they all shall ascend the sacrificial high platform to face the Chief Divine's judgment!"

Hearing this, Ecatl hesitated slightly, showing a moment of doubt. From Tree Snake City to Golden Bay City, the six hundred miles of supply routes rely solely on a City-State army and several thousand tribal defectors for maintenance. The tens of thousands of Totonac Tribes along the way have been forced to surrender under the purgative pressure of the Eastern Expedition Corps. As for the so-called subsequent great army of the Alliance, it practically does not exist.

"Family Head, when you led the army across, you pacified the surrendered tribes generously, and generously rewarded the chieftains. But now, with the post-weak supply routes, you severely reprimand, threatening with the might of the army... what if these tribes also turn against us..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote chuckled. He pointed to the red cardinals in the distance and patiently explained.

"Ecatl, my extensive pacification as I traveled was for long-term considerations, to win over the hearts of the various tribes. However, you must understand that these surrendered Totonac Tribes are like the red cardinals with narrow vision. In their hearts, they only have their own interests, and presently their allegiance to the Kingdom is very low!"

"Without the hearts being won over, only respect for authority can be enforced, there's no chance of them appreciating kind deeds. Thus, to drive them at this time, the Kingdom's force must be used as intimidation, and the threat of sacrificial judgment instilled as fear! However, if we placated gently, they might mistakenly perceive the Kingdom's softness, giving rise to unfit ideas!"

"Ah! So that's it! The Family Head is wise!"

Hearing this, Guard Commander Ecatl reflected briefly, then appeared enlightened. He nodded in pure admiration and respectfully bowed. Seeing the Guard Commander's gleeful expression and posture of reverence, Xiulote's earlier displeasure upon receiving bad news faded considerably.

"Family Head, considering the time, the Black Wolf Legion Commander should have reached the Coyote City area by now!"

"Hmm. The latest Eastern report was five days ago, when the Copper Cannon arrived outside Conical House City, showcasing Thunderbolt's Divine punishment. Subsequently, under the persuasion of Chieftain Yoltzin, Conical House City finally opened its gates in surrender... ten thousand more Seaside Tribes have joined the Alliance!"

As Xiulote spoke of the Eastern victory reports, a smile of satisfaction appeared on his face, and his mood finally lightened. He gazed at the greenwood of the East, quietly contemplating.

"After capturing Golden Bay City, another twenty thousand defectors, forty thousand surrendered tribes. Capturing Conical House City added a few thousand defectors, thirty thousand tribes... on the Eastern Expedition frontline currently, only the Imperial Guard Legion and Black Wolf Army, over ten thousand Kingdom's main force, control over thirty thousand Totonac defectors! And behind Snake City are eight thousand Yu Yan Legion, with almost the same number of defectors..."

"The more battles won against defectors, the fewer brutal sieges, resulting in unused surplus! I have already promoted four thousand Totonac Tribal Warriors, granting them land along with three thousand Mistec Vanguard Camps. In the Imperial Guard Legion, eight hundred Seaside Warriors have been selected and accepted, along with over a thousand absorbed by the Black Wolf Army..."

Here, Xiulote paused, calculating momentarily, then shook his head helplessly.

"Out of more than thirty thousand Totonac defectors, only over six thousand have been integrated into the Kingdom! The remaining over twenty thousand defectors, although already converted to the Chief Divine, still pose a potential instability threat that can only be suppressed by military forces... yet to genuinely win their allegiance, how difficult it is to speak of achieving it!"

Hearing this, Ecatl hesitated slightly, and fell silent. Even one as perceptive as him couldn't suddenly offer any words that would please the Family Head. After all, handling these tens of thousands of surrendered Totonac defectors was a matter he knew little about, rendering him incapable of proposing any truly viable solutions.

"Dealing with defectors, understanding the internal affairs of the Totonac people... hmm, the priests have also used the Truth Serum to check. If the newly installed Serpent Mother Chieftain from Golden Bay Tribe has sent gifts worthy of attention, well, it might be... interesting!"

"Oh? A gift? That alluring Snake Woman... what 'interesting' gift did she send?"

"Family Head, she sent a long wooden box, inside which was a bundle wrapped in cotton...,

"And when the trusted aides unfolded the cotton blanket, they found a woman draped in gauze inside!..."

"Huh? A woman wrapped in a cotton blanket?!..."

At this, Xiulote raised an eyebrow, a surprised expression appearing on his face. Momentarily, he was taken aback, as if in a daze.

"Yes, wise Family Head!"

Guard Commander Ecatl nodded, smiling as he answered.

"Precisely, the gift wrapped in the cotton blanket, was herself!"