

Civilization 1331

Chapter 1331: Summoned by the Divine, Bowed in Submission...

"The Ancestors originated at the river... the tribes gathered at the riverbank... we passed down the legacy along the river! ... Waters of all sizes... people of all sizes... finally reached the sea's edge! ..."

In the village of Krasop by the river, the tribal elder, River, is singing a ballad in front of the tribe's central hearth. This is a very small tribe known as the Swamp Tribe, even if you add up all the elders and young people around the hearth, there are only about a hundred people. Meanwhile, on the other side, the exploration fleet, consisting of armored Samurai and sailors, is nearly double in number.

The appearance of the exploration longship brought great shock and terror to this small tribe that migrated from upstream. Especially when about a hundred to two hundred armored and bow-wielding Samurai "with ill intentions" landed on the shore, surrounding the Swamp Tribe, the faces of many tribespeople all showed horror.

The tribal elder, River, trembling, stepped forward. She personally lit the tribe's bonfire to welcome this sea-born tribal army. The Krasop people are a matriarchal clan migrating along the river, where a tribe is a large family. And the tribal elder, who is the Chieftain, is also the tribal grandmother.

As the tribe's Chieftain, the elder River led the Swamp Tribe from over two hundred miles upstream on the Columbia River to the downstream estuary, arriving just over two years ago.

In the past few decades, in the upstream Willamette Valley region, later known as the Portland area, the "powerful" Kalapuya people have been gradually rising, expanding step by step. They occupied the warm, arable river valleys, annexing many small tribes of a hundred to two hundred people along the Long River, gradually tending to form a Tribal Alliance. And all the tribes downstream of the Columbia River have felt the pressure of this new Tribal Alliance's rise!

Several tribal groups on the north bank of the Columbia River, including the Chinook Tribe, Cathlamet Tribe, Wahkiakum Tribe, are moving towards unity. They would become the predecessors of the Chinookan Confederacy, fighting against the Kalapuya Alliance for hundreds of years. In the mid-19th century, under the fearful westward wave of the Yankees, the two rival alliances even came together, uniting the tribes along several hundred miles of the river for a heroic fight and sacrifice...

Currently, the Rivermouth Alliance has just emerged on the north bank of the Great River, while the Krasop Tribe on the south bank has yet to join. The elder River, watching the well-equipped elite Hunters before her, looked at their gigantic, unseen bows and arrows, with deep fear on her face. She knew that with the strength of the tribe, there was no way to resist, and extinction could come overnight!

The rise of a Tribal Alliance always has a huge ripple effect on the surrounding tribes for hundreds of miles. These years, all tribes up and down the Great River began migrating, and conflicts were gradually intensifying. In their continuous migration, the Swamp Tribe also encountered many hostile tribe attacks along the long Columbia River. Their population dwindled from around two to three hundred to just over one hundred, struggling to reach this peaceful yet barren estuary.

Yet, the peaceful days lasted only two years. The tribe had just birthed children when so many elite Hunters launched an attack on them! It should be known that the "powerful" Kalapuya tribes, even if tens of thousands were united, could only choose about two hundred armored and bow-wielding elite Hunters!

"Where on earth does this tribal army come from? Is it from the powerful Kalapuya to the east? Or the united Rivermouth tribes to the north? Or, have the people from the southern Tila also risen to prominence? ..."

Thinking of this, the elder River showed bitterness. She carefully examined the Kingdom's Warriors before her, staring at the gleaming sharp weapons in their hands, secretly alarmed. She pursed her lips, deeply lowering her head, welcoming the two Leaders coming down from the longship, singing the ballad once more.

"The sea is the harbor of the river's water... the sea is the boundless Great River! ... By the Great River where the Ancestors never came, we met the people by the river... the powerful tribe by the river! Where do you come from? Where do you intend to flow? ... You are a vast Great River meeting a stream like us, what will be the outcome? ..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro glanced at Scholar Mikki, and Mikki looked at Zuvaro. Their eyes were filled with both surprise and confusion. This tribe on the southern bank of the Great River, seeing the fleet dock, reacted so passionately! They seem to have met "kin", lighting bonfires, gathering everyone, singing and dancing, yet their intentions remain unknown. Most critically, the loud ballads the other party sang were in Kwak'wala, belonging to the rare Wakashan language family, of which they didn't understand a word.

"Oh my (t'łána)! Oh my! Oh my! ... Oh dear (Tsíst)! Oh dear! Oh dear! ... Uh? ... What's this? ..."

Mikki the Sage tilted his head to listen, only hearing two repeated phrases, his mind filled with question marks.

The Krasop people revered rivers, and in their language and culture, the most important word was "river"! A larger river was called "t'łána", a smaller one "Tsíst", and "river" was also a highly polysemous word. It could mean "source of life, life", "gathered tribe, group", "ancestral legacy", or even "tribal fusion"... Thus, these two words, differing in size, were not just various nouns but could be verbs or represent a complete meaning, changing with context...

"T'łána! Tsíst! Tsíst! ... Tsíst! T'łána! T'łána! ... Hunters from the Great River, what do you want? ... The tribe is left only with a shallow stream, what source of water is there for such a Great River as you to rush fiercely upon? ..."

The elder River first showed anger in her eyes, then filled with sorrow. She widened her aged, clouded eyes, staring at the silent Hunter Leaders. Then she saw Scholar Mikki, holding a sharp axe, approach step by step, place the axe on the ground, then pointed at the tribespeople, displaying a "fierce" smile.

"The leader of the Tribal Huntsmen... do you want us to surrender?"

The elder River was silent for a moment, glanced at over a hundred tribespeople behind her, both young and old. Among them, only about thirty able-bodied men could fight, clearly not opponents for these elite Hunters. Most of these elite Hunters specialized in running and tracking, meaning attempting to flee wasn't an option either.

"Oh my! ... Oh dear! ... Ah oh! ... The tribe's streams flowing downstream finally got engulfed by larger Great Rivers... This is an inescapable fate, determined by the End of the river! ..."

Singing up to here, the elder River wore a bleak expression. She turned to her tribespeople behind her, tearfully announcing.

"Lay down your weapons! ... The tribe surrenders to them!"

"Chief Divine bless us! We come with good intentions! ..."

Scholar Mikki offered gifts with a gentle smile, observing the tearful and exuberant tribe before them, pondering the significance of these peculiar rituals. But soon, his smile froze, turning into complete shock and bewilderment!

"Ah? Chief Divine! This... this is... uh?!"

Before him, the tribal elder River slowly knelt, bowing in a gesture of submission. A few breaths later, over a hundred tribal people also laid everything down, kneeling and prostrating. The campfire behind them cast orange-red silhouettes, resembling a breathtaking mural in a myth, with the tribe being moved by the Chief Divine...

"Uh! ... Is this... the call of the Chief Divine? Proactively submitting to the brilliance of the Divine from across ten thousand miles in the Northern Land!"

Scholar Mikki, murmuring, watched the prostrate Swamp Tribe, eyes gradually shining with divinity. At this moment, his usually wise mind inexplicably swelled with a floating thought.

"Or perhaps... I walk in the Chief Divine's will, basking in the Divine's glory, gaining divine dignity! ... Letting these riverine tribespeople admire and worship, willingly prostrating themselves? ... Haha!"

Chapter 1332: North Port at 46 Degrees North, Focused Development

The autumn sun spread clear and bright, with fine sand pure white, the beach is very wide, the waves rolling at the rivermouth. The vast Pacific Ocean and the turbulent Columbia River both collide and converge here, causing the surrounding river and marsh water to display ever-changing hues.

Scholar Miki crouched by the riverbank, behind him the low tribal village, in front the wide great river, to the right the docked longships, and to the left, Zuvaro sitting cross-legged.

"Zuvaro, what should we do?"

"Hmm? What do you mean what should we do?"

"Chief Divine bear witness! This Krasop tribe thought we were pursuing enemies. To protect their tribespeople, they surrendered to us..."

Scholar Miki held his chin, gazing at the flowing river water, a look of shattered dreams on his face.

"But I thought they'd been divinely inspired to convert voluntarily! Or maybe I... ahem! We even gathered the fleet's priests to hold a collective conversion ceremony for them! ... I wondered why they kept crying with excitement, turns out it was the sorrow of their tribe's destruction... and even more absurdly, it took us seven days to understand what had really happened through laborious communication!"

"Ha! Miki, what are you worrying about? The Jaguar has already swallowed the rabbit, do you expect it to spit it out?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro chuckled, looking nonchalant.

"Isn't it fine this way? This tribe of over a hundred people has voluntarily joined us and converted to the Chief Divine. Such a divine-inspired miracle can even be recorded into our epic, shrouding our exploration in divine glory! ... And with their village, the Kingdom now has a ready-made port camp. These people are all skilled at building small huts, in eight or nine days they've constructed over a dozen small cabins..."

"Oh! Tomorrow, continue as planned, from the fifty people we plan to leave behind, select about ten, and arrange marriages with all the unmarried women in this tribe, hold a wedding... Oh! Remember to have that old Grandmother Rivermouth attend as the female representative..."

"Preaching, intermarriage, establishing a tribe... this complete set means the Kingdom will establish a foothold here! Moreover, with the protection of the Kingdom's Warriors, there's no need to worry about potential enemies of these swamp tribes... And when this tribe is mostly assimilated, then we look for another small tribe to swallow! ... I've been pondering, you know, this forced annexation is also a method!..."

"Zuvaro! The situation along this great river is quite different than other places! We need to be more cautious!..."

Scholar Miki's expression turned serious, speaking solemnly.

"This Krasop tribe's swamp section was easily subdued by us because they migrated from upstream, engaged in battles with hostile tribes, suffering heavy casualties and exhaustion! Their fighting spirit was worn out by migration and losses. Fleeing all the way to the coast, they had nowhere else to escape... Such coincidental opportunities are hard to come by again..."

"Ha! Miki, think carefully why they migrated? Is it not because there appeared belligerent, invasive great tribes upstream? And these great tribes fighting each other, like several wolves vying for Wolf King, driving deer, rabbits, birds, all over the place!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro stroked his chin, eyes gleaming with cleverness. To him, the chaotic situation was like a Short-tailed Cat catching the scent of fish, eager to pounce at once.

"Chief Divine bless us! This kind of chaotic situation is precisely the opportunity for our Kingdom's Warriors to display their formidable martial power! With our strength, we can totally, under the name of protecting the Krasop various tribes, gather up all the hundreds or thousands of tribespeople here!..."

"Kingdom's strength? Zuvaro, we only have two hundred people and four ships right now! How many do you plan to leave here? If we encounter a truly large-scale enemy, a battle will cause how many casualties? You know, several great tribes in the upstream valley can probably mobilize hundreds to thousands of warriors!..."

Scholar Miki furrowed his brow, asking in a deep voice.

"What's more... We've already learned the location of the 'Bay of a Hundred Lakes' from the old Grandmother Rivermouth! That vast bay full of lakes is truly an unprecedented great maritime port, and surely the place prophesied by Your Majesty! And it's just northeast of us, land and rivers can convey news, even tribes have migrated from there. According to my estimate, it should be between north latitude 47-48 degrees, and we are already at north latitude 46 degrees!..."

"Hmm... the Bay of a Hundred Lakes, the great gulf in Your Majesty's prophecy, is indeed within sight now!... Then the number of people left here..."

Hearing this, Zuwaro pursed his lips tightly, rubbing his face in vexation. After a while, he suppressed his colonization impulse, prioritizing the exploration task.

"Alright! Miki, then we leave two longships and a hundred people here. This North Port is entrusted to First Level Preaching Priest and the brothers Tu Shan and Tu He! With their cooperation, I feel more at ease. Then, we will take the remaining two longships and continue to the great maritime port in the prophecy!"

"Huh? Leave two ships, two Preaching Priests?"

Hearing this, Scholar Miki looked shocked. When the Kingdom Fleet first embarked, each longship had one Preaching Priest. And leaving half of the remaining four longships here means...

"Zuwaro! You intend to manage this place as the most important port north of West Mountain Port? Are you not planning to establish a port at the great maritime port in Your Majesty's prophecy?"

"Hmm... Chief Divine witness! When we reach the bay, the fleet will also find a port where a supply station will be set up. That Cedar Shaman even told us there's a rather powerful Rock River Great Tribe in the bay..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro smiled, patiently explaining.

"Miki, you've also heard the news of the 'Bay of a Hundred Lakes', the climate there is relatively warm, and the fish harvest is abundant, making it a place many fishing and hunting tribes fight over! ... Regarding that place, I'm uncertain of the situation and dare not rashly establish the main port there... because, after all, the Kingdom's strength in the Northern Land is still insufficient! Leaving a hundred people there is very difficult to deter surrounding great tribes..."

"As for the rivermouth right now, it's something tangible! These Krasop people's tribes are small in scale, very scattered, without any stubborn beliefs, can be easily dev-... oh, integrated! So, it's better to prioritize the North Port here! ... Moreover, we need to delineate territory first, subdue enough power.

This way, even if the various upstream tribes annex each other and determine a true strongman, they won't be able to extend their claws here!..."

"Moreover, it's already early October. This year's exploration will probably conclude when we reach the Bay. After that, it's getting familiar with the Northern Land's climate and accumulating more experience... After all, we've come from the Yaolem Great Tribe at north latitude 26 degrees, the Kingdom's Reagan Town, to this Great River at north latitude 46 degrees, establishing the Kingdom's North Port!... An entire 20 degrees of northern exploration and colonization... it's time to properly adapt to the Northern Land's cold... And by the time the Kingdom's subsequent support arrives, after stockpiling enough power, we will then consider the expansion of the Bay of a Hundred Lakes!"

The Great River surged westward, the mountain forest vast and lush. Scholar Miki listened to Zuwaro's plan, looked out over the grand river and mountain of the Northern Land, contemplated for a long time, and finally nodded heavily.

"Chief Divine bless the fleet! Good!..."

Chapter 1333: Legend of the Ancestral Whale, Ice and Snow Siren?

In early October, the fleet of the Kingdom set sail again from North Port on the southern bank of the Columbia River. By now, the entire fleet had been reduced to two longships with a crew of one hundred. Stationed at North Port, however, were two longships, a dozen canoes, one hundred Samurai sailors, and over one hundred tribespeople.

Before officially departing, Exploration Captain Zuwaro found an opportunity to carefully instruct the two Preaching Priests, Tu Shan and Tu He. These two priests came from a background of commoners, or more precisely, they were orphaned commoners raised by the Kingdom. In the Kingdom of the Lake, there were many orphaned commoners being brought up in this way. Their sole allegiance lay with the Kingdom Priesthood and the exploration fleet that adhered to Divine Revelation. In Zuwaro's heart, he trusted these two more than some of the other noble descendants.

"Chief Divine bless, remember what I say! The situation around this rivermouth is very complex, but also holds many opportunities... you need to grasp with both hands, one hard, one soft. Sometimes hard, sometimes soft. Some places hard, some places soft... do you understand?"

"Understood, boss!"

"Ha! What do you understand?"

"Hard means weapons, soft means leather armor."

The sturdy priest Tu Shan scratched his head and seriously replied.

"Chief Divine witnesses! We use strong weapons to face the challenges from hostile tribes, and soft leather armor to protect those tribes willing to submit!"

"Hmm... not bad!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pondered for a moment and nodded. It seemed Tu Shan was more suited to manage the military affairs of the settlement. He then looked at the other priest.

"Tu He, what do you say?"

"Uh... soft is the tongue, telling the tribespeople in the camp. They are our brothers, they are protected by us, and they should believe in the Chief Divine... As for the hard..."

The tall and thin Tu He chuckled and replied in a low voice.

"Marrying women of the tribes... and if there are troublemakers among the hunters, deal with them!... Boss, you taught us all this..."

"Ahem!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro rubbed his temples, his expression slightly unnatural. He quickly glanced at Miki and softly spoke.

"Watch your limits! In this wilderness of the Northern Land, every follower of the Chief Divine is precious... After I leave, you manage civil affairs, Tu Shan manages military affairs, work well together! Chief Divine bless!"

"Understood, boss! Chief Divine bless!..."

The two longships sailed into the waves of the Northern Land, watched by the crowd onshore. The autumn of October remained bright, but traces of winter's cold had already appeared. Trees by the shore shed their leaves, turning yellow and withered, while the mountains turned a solemn tawny color. The fleet traveled three hundred miles and arrived at a prominent bay. Settled on the inner side of the bay were the Chehalis people.

The language of the Chehalis people belonged to the not widely distributed Salishan language family. Unfortunately, no one in the fleet spoke or understood it. Therefore, when the Chehalis fishing boats approached for mutual greeting and exchange, both sides were puzzled. However, Scholar Mikki, through repeated gestures and introductions by the other party, discerned the name of their tribe.

"Chálali? Xialali? Uh, pointing at the river's surface, then at themselves... This river is also called Xialali River, Xia He?... Then you are the Xia He tribe?..."

Scholar Mikki, through guesses and deductions, roughly figured out the name of this tribe. Next came the practiced gift-giving sessions. First, he offered a Copper Dagger, letting the fishermen guide the fleet to the tribe. Then, he gifted Tribe Chief Xia He a Bronze Axe, who in return, offered a white reindeer hide. Indeed, by this point, traces of North American reindeer could occasionally be found here, indicating that the white Far North land was getting closer!

"Hi-yo-hey! Ah-yee-ah-ah-hey!... The Great River flows from the distant Great Lake, the Great Lake was dug by the massive Ancestral Whale... The body of the Ancestral Whale transformed into the rushing Xia He; the bones of the Ancestral Whale became the wide river channel; the tears of the Ancestral Whale are the waters of the Great Lake... And our ancestors came from the Great Lake... Where is the Great Lake? It's to the east and to the north, there are countless lakes, and countless fish..."

Summer is the season of harvest and also the time for celebration. The fleet stayed with the Xia He tribe for two days, replenishing some smoked fish, venison, and berries and just in time for the Chehalis people's Fish Festival ceremony. This was an important tribal ceremony as well as a vital celebration, with nearly all of the seven to eight hundred tribe members participating. The fleet was also invited to join the ceremony.

"Xia He rushes, the Ancestor Spirit's soul blesses the tribe, right in this flowing water! The salmon swim, the great spirit brings food, also bringing the tribe's vitality!..."

Tribe Chief Xia He, wearing only a cloth wrap and bare-chested, jumped and sang powerfully by the riverbank, his voice loud like a Thunderbolt. The strongest hunters and fishermen of the tribe lined up by the riverside. Then, to Scholar Mikki's amazement, Tribe Chief Xia He shouted something, and over a hundred young strong men plunged into the river all at once!

"Come now! More fish, arriving in this fat season of autumn, await to be captured by warriors!... Go! Strong young lads, whoever catches the first fish of the festival will be the tribe's fisherman!..."

Tribe Chief Xia He watched the churning river with a smile. Around a hundred young tribesmen thrashed about vigorously in the Great River, catching fish with bare hands. Meanwhile, the women and the old and young of the tribe stared wide-eyed at the bare-chested men in the water.

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Chapter 1334: Legend of the Ancestral Whale, Ice-Snow Siren? (Part 2)

The elderly woman laughed loudly, extending her fingers in comparison, while the young girl blushed deeply, her gaze fixed. Because of the fish festival held twice a year in spring and autumn, it could also be seen as their coming-of-age ceremony...

The men displayed their strong, agile bodies and their skills in fishing and supporting a family, while the women widened their eyes, selecting and seeking suitable partners. If several women simultaneously fancied one, it was then up to the man to choose.

"Hmm... this fishing and hunting tribe is quite unpretentious! There's no division between nobles and priests here..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro stroked his chin, scrutinizing this sizable tribe, pondering for a while. Then, with great interest, he watched a tribal huntsman with exceptional water skills, who clung tightly to a big fish with his hands, relying solely on the strength of his legs to swim in from the Great River.

"Whoa! Such remarkable water skills! Truly a natural sailor!"

Zuvaro widened his eyes, watching the exceedingly agile hunter rapidly approach the shore. When he landed, he immediately raised the big fish in his hand high up. Then, a boiling cheer erupted from the surrounding crowd.

"Xwálaq"! Siwalak! Siwalak! The fishing warrior! The tribe's fish man!..."

The excited shouts fell into the ears of the people in the fleet, although incomprehensible, they were unmistakably high praises. The hunter held the big fish high, proudly shouting his name to everyone.

"Ancestor Spirit blesses me! The best hunter of the tribe! Fish man Xia Yuying!..."

In the tradition of the Xiares, the warriors who win the fishing competition are called "fish men." This is a very high honor, and the rewards are immediately apparent.

Soon, more than a dozen tribal girls with ponytails rushed toward the victorious hunter Xia Yuying. They surrounded him, loudly comparing and letting him choose a wife. The robust Xia Yuying glanced around and chose an equally strong girl. This, too, is the tradition of the Northern Tribes, where physical strength is a common aesthetic for both men and women.

Soon, other young men in the Great River also returned with the fish they caught. The tribe's women likewise rushed toward them. As for the young men who caught fish last, or only picked up some crabs and shrimps, they could only return crestfallen, with not even a single woman looking at them. If they want to change such an embarrassing treatment, they must diligently practice fishing skills and become more familiar with water before the next spring fish festival.

"The competition within the tribe... seems to be focused on fishing... truly fascinating!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro watched the entire fish festival ritual with interest, until the sky gradually darkened. The content that followed was somewhat inappropriate for children and not suitable to watch further.

"Zuwaro, what do you think of these Xiares?"

"Chief Divine witness! These people are natural sailors... strong and agile, and familiar with the situation in the Northern Land... only..."

"Only what?"

"Only we don't understand their language. Judging by their relaxed celebratory demeanor, there don't seem to be any hostile tribes around... if we want to spread faith and recruit sailors, it'll have to be done gradually!"

During two days of rest at Xia He, everyone gestured and inquired about the situation of "Bay of Hundred Lakes." Hearing their inquiries, Tribe Chief Xia An was visibly excited. He spoke a lot, but unfortunately, the fleet understood very little... Eventually, he drew a sketch on the mud, which Scholar Mikki carefully documented.

"Hundred Lakes... Great Lake... Great Bay... former ancestral land... Northeast... a river comes..."

"You want to go there? Two routes... one is the river, go east, then south, then north... follow the river to find... but many tribes... battles..."

"Another route is the sea, heading straight north to the northernmost point... turn southeast, row continuously... then you'll reach the Great Bay... all are lakes... lots of fish catches... many tribes..."

Zuwaro and Mikki pondered for a long time before understanding Xia He Chief's meaning. They discussed for a while and ultimately decided to take the safe and straightforward sea route: first north past the cape, then turn east-southeast. If not found, then land and inquire from the tribes.

The fleet continued northward, and on the east coast appeared a series of towering mountains. The peaks of the mountains were covered in white snow, looking like clouds in the sky. In later times, this range of mountains had a very awe-inspiring name, called the "Sanctuary of All Gods of Greece"... oh no, it's the "Olympic National Park." The most famous peak among them is "Olympos West Peak."

Under the gaze of the "Divine Mountain Range," the fleet sailed north for five hundred miles, finally reaching a sharp sea cape. The continuous coastline interrupted here, forming a wide water surface heading southeast, which could also be seen as the extension of a long strait. To the northwest direction, after a break of several tens of miles, steep cliffs reappear.

"Chief Divine witness! Here we are already between 48-49 degrees north latitude, close to the edge of the far north... these two sides of the coast, one heading northwest, the other southeast... according to Your Majesty's prophecy, it should be..."

The longship stopped at the sea cape, everyone gazed at the steeply twisting coast, looking at the desolate gray-brown cape, also listening to the beautiful singing of the group of whales. In later times, this cape and strait were famous whale watching spots, a must-go area for countless whales. Hmm, also a good place for catching big fish.

"Zuwaro!..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro was still contemplating the prophecy when he was suddenly interrupted by Mikki. He looked up and saw his friend raising his ears, listening attentively.

"Zuwaro, listen! Listen carefully! Northeast? Is there some strange sound?"

"Uh..."

Zuwaro rubbed his ears, listened for a while, his face showing confusion.

"Mikki, I only hear the whales calling. It seems in the northeast, also seems like the north. Oh! It must be several whales!..."

"No! No! The ones in the north are whales, the sound from the northeast, although resembling whales, is not quite like whales, so odd..."

Mikki the Sage frowned, frustratedly scratched his head. He thought about it, then called over Le Tian, the cloak hunter, for him to listen carefully.

"Le Tian, you have good ears, listen carefully..."

"Uh? This is? This is!..."

Cloak hunter Le Tian's ears were very keen, like a bat, they twitched. Then, his facial expression gradually changed, becoming more solemn, even showing a hint of fear.

"Le Tian, what did you hear?"

"Ancestor Spirit! I heard whale songs, along with sounds very like whales but not whales! That sound is rhythmic, and keeps cycling... This... This must be the Ice Snow Sirens!"

Upon saying this, cloak hunter Le Tian was visibly flustered, pacing around nervously on the deck.

"Ah! The tribe's mythology, the far north land's whale song!... The legendary Ice Snow Sirens! The man-eating sea monsters!..."

"Uh..."

Mikki the Sage was speechless, seeing the usually bold cloak hunter caught in the fear of myths. He shook his head and looked at Zuvaro.

"Zuvaro, did you really not hear anything?"

"Chief Divine witness! Whale songs drifting from so far, only dog's ears could hear, right?... Hmm, I wasn't insulting you..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro chuckled, shook his head. Then, he rubbed his chin, glanced at the Samurai armored and armed with spears on the ship, pondered for a while, and made a decision.

"Mikki, let's move closer and take a look!"

"Ancestor Spirit, don't go! The sound changed! It's changed!"

Seeing Zuwaro's action, cloak hunter Le Tian hurriedly shouted to stop him. He listened attentively, with a heavy heart, remembering various tribal legends, his face continuously whitening.

"You hear it! The cries! The whales are crying!... The Sirens' sound is gone, only the whales' sound left... It's the Sirens' hunt!..."

"Eh?... The sound indeed has changed!... This seems to be..."

Mikki the Sage pondered for a moment, forcefully pulled at his hair. Then, he helplessly gave Le Tian a glance, saying to Zuwaro.

"Zuwaro, wave the command flag! The disturbance is right ahead of us, near the northeastern coast. Let's go have a look!... Let's go! Chief Divine protect us!"

Chapter 1335: The Tribe That Understands the Sea, the Makarans' Whale Unit

"Ancestral Spirit! Ancestors!... This... Ah, this!..."

The narrow strait was filled with surging tides, cold reefs standing firmly above the water, and the urgent cries of the whale were close at hand. Hunter Le Tian stared in amazement at the "Ice Snow Maidens" hunting the whale. He recalled his recent fear and glanced at the smiling leaders on the ship, his old face instantly flushed red.

"Uh... this... it turns out... some strange tribes from who knows where are actually whaling around the coast!..."

"Oh! Chief Divine! This group of whaling tribes... are really powerful!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro stroked his chin, his face showing surprise, watching the mythical battle scene before him. Just ahead on the sea, a team of forty to fifty Tribal Huntsmen were hunting a giant beast over ten meters long, the immensely strong gray whale of the Northern seas!

At this moment, these strong sea hunters surrounded the crashing and calling whale, roughly divided into two parts.

They had built a wooden whaling platform on the reefs by the coast, essentially a large wooden raft. Then, seven or eight hunters stood on the raft, using very long harpoons, stabbing desperately into the whale in the sea, splashing up blossoms of blood. The sharp bone-tipped harpoons pierced the skin, sometimes taken away by the violent whale. At this time, the hunters on the raft would pull on the leather ropes attached to the harpoons, retracting them and exposing another bloody wound.

On the floating raft, there were also a few strange small drums, tossed aside for the moment. Not far from the raft, there floated a several-meter-long wooden sculpture, resembling another nodding "whale" at a glance.

Most of the hunters, however, gathered in small groups, sat in about a dozen small boats, paddling and circling around the central whale. They threw out long and tough grass nets, trapping the injured giant gray whale within, restricting its movement. They also threw out strips of whale skin and sharkskin ropes, quickly winding back and forth, trying to tightly bind the large whale's body. As the whale continued to struggle and crash, they maneuvered the boats like fishing, loosening or tightening the binding net!

When the whale's struggle slightly eased, the hunters on the boats would throw spears tipped with shark teeth, fiercely stabbing into the whale's head. Their fearless posture was like warriors in an epic, battling with a mythical giant beast!

"Chief Divine witness! These hunters from who knows where, relying only on small boats, rafts, grass nets and leather ropes, along with bone and wood harpoons and spears, dare to hunt such a giant sea beast?!"

Scholar Miki stared wide-eyed, carefully observing every detail of the hunt, frequently exclaiming in awe.

"Chief Divine! Stabbing, javelin throwing, binding, entwining... Forty to fifty people cooperating together, bravely challenging the giant beast... The coordination of these huntsmen at sea, it is so seamless! They are truly the finest hunters I have ever seen!"

"Indeed! These are the best sailors I've seen! Sailors adapted to the Northern Land sea surface!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's lips curled up, excitement showing on his face. He was pondering how to interact with this strange sea tribe when the other party directly sent a small boat towards the two large ships.

"You on the sea! Tribes on the large ship!... Together! Help us! Whaling!... This giant whale drawn by the Ancestral Spirit Wooden Drum is truly too big!"

Two tribal huntsmen paddled a swift kayak, quickly approaching the longship. The leading elder huntsman, Whale Sea, face flushed, body covered in sweat, loudly shouted towards the longship. First, he shouted powerfully in the tribe's Nuu-chah-nulth, the same Salish language family used by the Salish people. Then he saw the blank faces on the bow, gritted his teeth, and switched to halting Penutian, which the on-board translator could barely understand.

"Ancestors' protection! Ancestral Whale's protection! Quick! Quick, lend a hand! The meat, skin, and oil we catch... we'll... we'll share equally!..."

The old huntsman Whale Sea loudly promised "equal share," with a heart feeling like it was bleeding.

The tribe's finest huntsmen had been busy for so long, first building the wooden platform, then using the Ancestral Spirit Wooden Drum to drum, imitating the whale's song, to lure prey from the sea. Then sending people to row small boats, with the tribe's whale wooden sculpture nodding and shaking, enticing the "amorous" whale to drop its guard and eagerly come to "stick close"...

Finally, they pounced for an ambush! Throwing grass nets, entwining leather ropes, controlling the unresponsive whale, then spearing and harpooning! This predation process had been rehearsed hundreds of times by the tribe's huntsmen, practiced skillfully. Yet now an accident had happened! This damned gray whale was truly too large, its skin too thick, and it bled too much... It had lost so much blood, yet it was still violently struggling in a death spasm. The binding grass net seemed about to break! Once it broke free from the bind, swimming madly into the deep sea, the tribe's hunt would fail, not

even retrieving the dozen precious whale harpoons and javelins, simply a gift to the sharks in the deep sea...

Thinking of this, the old huntsman Whale Sea glanced again at the violent huge whale nearby and the forty to fifty struggling tribemates, steeled his heart, and shouted once more.

"Tribes on the two large ships!... As long as you help, we'll distribute the catch per capita!... Ancestor witness! Per capita share!"

Chapter 1336: The Tribe That Understands the Sea, the Makarans' Whale Unit

"Eh? That old Hunter, what's he shouting about?"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro scratched his head, puzzled, and looked at the Translator Tuowu. Tuowu said a few words, Le Tian nodded, then conveyed it to everyone.

"He said, let's go up and help! Hunt together, divide the prey equally!"

"Haha! Truly a blessing from the Chief Divine!"

Upon hearing this, Zuwaro's face broke into a smile. He was contemplating how to connect with these excellent sailors when the Chief Divine bestowed the opportunity. He didn't hesitate, and immediately ordered the two longships.

"Chief Divine's protection! Raise the red banner! Let's go, help these scattered brothers, and hunt down this giant beast of the sea!"

"Chief Divine's protection!"

The crew of the fleet shouted in unison, and then followed the old Hunter, Whale Sea, quickly approaching the whaling boats and rafts.

"Bad news! The net is about to give way! This Giant Whale is going to escape! Hurry, we must kill it quickly!"

The old Hunter, Whale Sea, took a quick glance, his heart trembled, and he urgently shouted towards the longship.

"Do you have spears? Shoot it quickly! Aim at its weakest points, around the eyes, throat, underbelly, and the base of the tail! Watch carefully, the middle of its skin is the thickest, very difficult to penetrate!"

The old Hunter was still shouting, while the warriors on the longship were already taking action. They raised sharp Bronze Javelins, aiming at the colossal creature ten meters away, mustering their strength, and fiercely hurled them!

"Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!"

In the old Hunter's astonished gaze, these gleaming javelins fiercely pierced through the thick skin of the Giant Whale, penetrating up to five inches deep! Then, under his puzzled watch, the tribes on the longship surprisingly took out several peculiar "Crossbows," two people forcefully pulled the strings, aimed at the whale's head, and shot powerful Crossbow Arrows!

"Whoosh! Whoosh, whoosh!"

"Roar!... Hiss!... Woo!"

Under this round of fierce attacks, the enormous grey whale vigorously lifted its head, letting out a trembling cry. Its voice began as a furious low roar, followed by a penetrating sharp scream, then transformed into a prolonged, mournful call. In this near-death moment, it still confusedly looked towards a strange "whale" floating motionlessly on the water not far away, recalling the beautiful song that attracted it, unable to comprehend what had transpired. It only desired to stick with its kin, doing the things whales love, but ended up in such a predicament...

"It's almost over! The final strike!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro observed for a moment, noticing the grey whale's movements slowing down, and the ocean almost completely filled with bright red. From afar, several sharks had already smelled the blood and began swimming, but upon seeing these "kin" hunting, they hesitated, watching from a distance.

"Can the gunner aim confidently at this whale, firing a shot without hitting the surrounding small boats?"

Zuwaro rubbed his hands, looking at the Tiger Squat Cannon gunner onboard. The gunner felt the swaying of the ship, glanced at the small boats circling, and confidently, resolutely... shook his head.

"Chief Divine bearing witness! I'm sure I won't hit the target!"

"Er..."

Zuwaro scratched his head, pondered for a few moments, then smiled and made a decision.

"Alright then! Just aim at the sky, and fire a round of empty shots!"

"Chief Divine's protection! All sailors, paddle with full force, retreat dozens of meters! Then, use the ship's bow to make a full-speed ramming towards the Giant Whale!"

"Haha! Let us end this sea giant with the most majestic stance, embedding the Chief Divine's authority into the hearts of these sea tribes! Fire the cannon! Charge!"

"Yes! Fire the cannon! Charge! Chief Divine's protection!"

At the bow of the flagship, a burst of fervent shouting erupted. Following that, a thunderbolt unlike any before suddenly appeared on this northern sea!

"Boom!"

In the eyes of the hunters at sea, filled with astonishment and fear, that strange large ship suddenly emitted smoke. Immediately, the strange large ship accelerated rapidly, like a spear thrown by a giant deity, with dozens of tons of weight, using its exceedingly sharp ram, it struck the dying giant whale with unmatched force!

"Roar!... Woo... Woo..."

Under this most ferocious attack, the massive gray whale suddenly burst forth with a wave of blood. Zuvaro stood at the bow tightly holding the reins, his face splattered with blood. Afterwards, he felt fulfilled and proud, watching this unparalleled giant beast, slowly lower its head, its body gradually turning over... Moments later, this more than ten meter long, weighing dozens of tons gray whale, belly up, floated motionless on the water's surface.

"Haha! Chief Divine witness! We have actually hunted a giant beast from the deep sea!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro raised his head and chest, shouting loudly, proudly declaring. And the surrounding sea tribes, after a moment of silence, burst forth into waves of cheer!

"Ancestor! We have truly hunted this gray whale!"

"Ancestral Whale bless! It has a great spirit, gifting us food to nourish the tribe! So much meat!"

"Great sea! It is our mother, nurturing us Makah people! We are offspring of the sea!..."

The crowd together excitedly cheered for a moment. The Makah people's small boats then became busy again. They used strong leather ropes to bind the dead gray whale. Then, over ten small boats vigorously rowed, dragging the gray whale towards the southeastern beach.

"Go! Hurry! Drag this rare prey to the shore for processing! Damn, this hunt took too long! Quite a few sharks have gathered in the distance!... These greedy big fish, have little meat, and taste very bad... Quickly go! Call friends from the longship to help drag the prey to shore together!... Leave the raft here for now, and the wood carvings too, the ancestral spirit's wooden drum must be taken with us!..."

Two longships from the exploration fleet also distributed several ropes, dragging the gray whale paddling towards the shore. And a dozen sharks swam not far away, chasing the bloodstains on the sea surface. Two quarters later, the gigantic gray whale finally stranded on the beach.

Then, dozens of tribal hunters of the Makah people started expertly butchering the whale. They peeled off the thick whale skin for making clothes, skin boats, and ropes. They also cut chunks of large meat, piling them on several long wooden rafts attached with ropes. And the leader of the hunters, old hunter Jinghai, once again approached the landing fleet members. This time, both parties finally had the time to have a proper exchange!

"Ancestral Whale bless! Friends on the large ship, thank you for your help! Without you, the tribe's strenuous effort in hunting would have failed..."

"Chief Divine bless! He guides us to meet distant brothers! This is a great hunt, sure to please the supreme Divines! And your fearless courage and outstanding whaling skills earn our extreme admiration!..."

"Haha! Thank you! Friends on the longship!"

Upon hearing the translated praises, old hunter Jinghai's face lit up with a smile. He keenly observed the leather armor and bronze axes of the Kingdom's warriors, and quickly glanced at the golden shaman ritual artifact that could produce thunder. He quickly recalled in his mind, yet even with his experience of sailing hundreds, if not thousands of miles, he couldn't think of any similar tribe.

"Ancestor! Which tribe is this from? So many elite hunters, such sharp javelins, arrows, and bronze axes, and the shaman ritual artifact of tremendous power..."

Old hunter Jinghai futilely recalled for a while, confirming this was the first encounter with these longship tribes. He pondered for a moment, then smiled while speaking.

"Ancestor witness! We Makah people are offspring of the sea, always keeping our word! The tribe's hunters are processing the prey, and the women of the tribe will also come to help. These whale meats need immediate smoking or pickling, which might take one or two days... And these raw leathers need washing and tanning, requiring even more time..."

"Friends! If you are willing, you can come with me to rest in the tribe first! Our tribe is very near, just ahead in the distance!..."

"Good! Of course! Praise the Chief Divine!"

Upon hearing this agreeable invitation, Exploration Captain Zuvaro's face was filled with a brilliant smile. He sincerely offered a prayer, then happily accepted.

"Thank you for your invitation!... Brother, the light of the Chief Divine shines upon you. It is also He who guides us to meet!... By the way! What is your tribe called?"

"Ah? Chief Divine, light? Guidance? Uh... Are you a noble tribe shaman?"

Old hunter Jinghai showed surprise, looking at the leader in front for a while, unsure of the other's identity. But after thinking, he still solemnly replied.

"Our tribe resides by the sea, blessed by the Ancestral Whale, holding His legacy, capable of whaling on the sea... Therefore, our tribe's name is Whale!"

Chapter 1337: The Dreamed Bay, Ruthless Law of the Northern Land

Pure white Arctic terns, flapping their black-edged white wings, chase after schools of fish in the strait. Black-footed albatrosses, on the other hand, spread their dark gray wings, soaring high above the coastal cliffs. This is north of the 48th parallel, future US-Canadian border, the northwest corner of Washington State, also the whaling grounds of the Maca people.

Old Hunter Whale Sea led a dozen small Maca boats, towing wooden rafts loaded with whale meat, around the steep promontory to the tribal camp twenty miles away. Meanwhile, two longships from the Kingdom were filled with freshly cut whale meat, accompanying the Maca fleet southeast to the shore.

Perhaps today's hunt was ample, perhaps it was out of respect for the fleet's formidable strength, or perhaps it was out of reverence for the peculiar Shaman Priests on the longships... when it came to the distribution of spoils of war, the Maca people honored their promise, displaying great generosity.

"Chief Divine! This one giant whale's meat must weigh tens of thousands of pounds! Both ships are filled to the brim, and we haven't even taken our share yet, we've already loaded twenty thousand pounds..."

Scholar Mikki surveyed the flagship, looking at the towering piles of whale meat, his face full of astonishment. Everyone participated in the whale meat distribution, estimating a total of twenty tons, with the fleet having taken more than half. Each longship loaded five to six tons of meat, two ships totaling eleven to twelve tons, over twenty thousand pounds! He had never seen this much meat in his lifetime!

The Mexican Plateau is densely populated, and all tribes severely lack meat. Commoners usually rely on pumpkins and beans as daily food, rarely having meat even during holidays. Only trained young Samurai could eat some expensive meat with the support of the entire family, ensuring their physical development. If this whale meat could somehow be transported back to the Kingdom, one wonders how many more strong Samurai could be trained! It's a pity...

"This whale meat needs to be transported back to the camp promptly, immediately smoked and cured! Otherwise, it won't take long for it all to spoil!..."

Scholar Mikki contemplated silently, calculating slightly, aware that this whaling harvest was enough for a thousand-member-sized tribe to eat for a whole month! Of course, the preservation of fresh meat is a critical issue; making smoked and cured meat is time-consuming and labor-intensive, and the Maca whaling team cannot stray too far from the camp, nor can they always have such abundant harvests...

In other words, such whaling activities mean the Maca hunters of the Whale Tribe can only conduct two or three times a month. After every hunt, a large number of whaling tools need repair. If they rely on whaling and fishing as their primary food sources, the tribe size would definitely not reach a thousand, likely around five hundred people...

"Chief Divine is witness! A tribe under a thousand members... even reaching their camp, there isn't enough confidence to consume the whale meat from two longships and over a hundred Samurai sailors! Hence, it's safe to go take a look..."

With this thought in mind, the two fleet leaders reached the Maca's Whale Tribe after half a day's rowing. It's a tribal fishing village established on the eastern side of the promontory, within a small bay. On the hillside by the shore, a tall totem pole stood, carved with an abstract, grand Ancestral Whale, featuring a face resembling humans. Next to the totem pole, massive whale bones were piled, seemingly part of a special Sacrificial Rite.

"Ancestor Spirit's blessing! Ancestral Whale's blessing! This time we went to sea, successfully hunting a gray whale!... Haha! This is the largest hunt of the tribe in half a year, and the Ancestors' most protected one! We've encountered trustworthy friends!..."

Old Hunter Whale Sea was excited, loudly announcing the hunting details to the welcoming tribespeople in the village. Seeing the returning fleet laden with catches, the villagers were jubilant, even singing in celebration.

"The Ancestor Spirit in the sea watches over us! It grants us the gifts of the sea. Oh Maca Maca, the name of the sea and whale! Oh Maca Maca!..."

"Chief Divine! Oh Maca Maca! These Maca people are all so tall! Truly born warriors!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro squinted his eyes, staring at the able-bodied men in the village, unable to resist licking his lips. These Maca people are genuine fishing and hunting tribes, residing in high-latitude cold regions, primarily eating fish meat and fish oil. Their height is around 1.8 meters, taller than the fleet's Samurai by a whole head. Mikki's prediction was accurate; this so-called Whale Tribe indeed only numbered around six hundred, just a couple hundred able-bodied men.

"Understanding of cooperation, born sailors and warriors... if they could be subdued and converted to Chief Divine..."

"Ancestor Witness! With the tribes sitting on large ships! Fresh whale meat spoils easily! You can give the share of whale meat to us for smoking and curing, just need to provide some meat to compensate for the tribe's firewood and salt... if you trust us!..."

Old Hunter Whale Sea arranged the hunters and came once again before the two "Shamans." He cautiously suggested, representing the entire tribe.

The Maca people live by fishing, with the tribe not large, and their whaling tradition emphasizes tribal unity. Therefore, they haven't divided into hereditary chieftains. The person who could lead the hunters in whaling would be elected as the Leader during the tribe meeting held every several years. Actually, Old Hunter Whale Sea's other identity is the elected Chieftain of the tribe.

Chapter 1338: The Dreamed-of Bay Land, the Cruel Law of the Northern Land (Part 2)

"Chief Divine bless! Brothers from afar, of course we believe you!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro smiled, looking around at the smoked meat racks, drying racks, and the salt pits dug up, readily agreeing.

"Guided by the prophecy of Divine Revelation, we meet across thousands of miles! Brothers of the Whale tribe, won't you invite us to the tribe's hearth for a warm drink?"

"Ah? ... Sure! Friends, brothers!..."

Hearing this, the old Hunter Whale Sea thought for a moment, also showing a joyful smile.

"Come! Let's build a bonfire and have a good chat! By the way, I also have some prepared blueberry juniper tea, perfect for entertaining guests!..."

Night fell, and the bonfire was lit. Everyone sat around the hearth, full from fresh whale meat and rich fish soup, their bodies warming up. Then, the old Hunter Whale Sea brewed a pot of the tribe's traditional herbal tea, with blueberries and juniper leaves, native to the Northern Land, tasting sour and sweet with a hint of herbal fragrance.

At that time, blueberries were still a specialty of North America, widely used as anti-inflammatory herbs by the Northern Land tribes. Juniper leaves were used to treat colds and coughs, combating the chilling climate.

Miki the Scholar drank the herbal tea, observing the still busy tribespeople, and glanced at the carefully stored peculiar small drum, curiously asking.

"Respected old Hunter, this peculiar small drum seems to make a low whale call... how is it made?"

"Haha! Ancestor Spirit bless! This is our Whale tribe's Ancestral Whale inheritance, the ancestral craftsmanship we rely on for a living..."

The old Hunter Whale Sea chuckled, taking out the wooden drum from his waist, gently tapping it for a while. The distant, long whale call echoed throughout the village, traveling far.

"However, it's no secret! This is an Ancestral Spirit Wooden Drum, made from wood and a whale's throat pouch, mimicking the whale's sound cavity... Our ancestors made many, we made many, but only a few are truly effective at attracting whales! Those are the blessings of the Ancestral Whale, not something easily made!..."

Hearing this, Miki the Scholar touched his nose, thoughtfully. This drum that mimics whales must contain some secret of Divine Revelation, though it seems the Maca people are only partially aware...

Beside him, Zuvaro pondered for a while before asking the question most concerning the fleet.

"Praise the Divine! Your Whale tribe hunts at sea, surely you've ventured far, possibly to the Northwest and Southeast coasts, right? ... What are those directions like? How is the hydrological climate in winter?"

"Eh? The Northwest and Southeast coasts?"

The old Hunter Whale Sea gave Zuvaro a puzzled look, then confidently laughed.

"Ha! Ancestors bear witness! You, a Shaman from the South on a longship, ask of the Northwest coast, other tribes might not know! But since you ask us, the Whale tribe, I do know!..."

"Beyond the cape and strait, heading to the Northwest coast... it appears full of mountains, a narrow fringe of land, but actually... it's a Great Island! A long, narrow Great Island stretching thousands of miles!... On its east side, separated by a narrow strait and rivers, lies the true continent..."

"And the island's climate, the eastern coast sees snowy mountains from the mainland, very cold, much colder. While the western coast, shielded by mountains, is warmer, with warm springs throughout the year..."

The Great Island spoken of by the old Hunter Whale Sea is the 11th largest island in North America, known later as Vancouver Island. The eastern shore is cold and snowy, while the western shore is relatively warm, featuring beautiful forested beaches and even geothermal hot springs to fend off the cold waves...

"Ah? A Great Island in the Northwest? Cold east, warm west?..."

Hearing this, Miki the Scholar was slightly stunned, then asked.

"Are there tribes on this island? Where does its northwest end lead?"

"Of course! Every land in the Northern Land has settled or migratory tribes! However, the further north you go, the smaller and less populous the tribes become! On this island, especially the western side, there are a few Seaside Tribes, each about a hundred people... Oh! They call themselves island folk, 'Snuneymuxw', the Snaw-Naw-As people."

Speaking of this, the old Hunter Whale Sea smiled confidently and said.

"However, when it comes to fishing skills, our Whale tribe is the best! The islanders in the north are just more adept at the Far North's cold climate and know the Northern sea's climate to avoid sudden storms, only fishing and ice fishing in winter..."

"Snaw-Naw-As people... island folk?... Adapt to the Far North climate, evade storms, able to ice fish..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro captured these key words, firmly remembering them. The further north the fleet traveled, the harsher and more unpredictable the climate and hydrology would become. At this time, under the enlightenment of Your Majesty, they must learn from the Northern tribes the skills to survive in the Northern Land to traverse the terrifying latter half of the journey. The best way, of course, was to coax someone onto the ship!...

Thinking of this, Zuwaro stroked his chin, looking at the old Hunter Whale Sea capable of translation, contemplating various ideas to get someone aboard... After a while, he pursed his lips, smiling warmly as he asked.

"Praise Chief Divine! It's wonderful to meet a brave seafarer like you!... By the way! We receive prophetic guidance, hearing that in the southeastern big bay, there's a warm climate, suitable for settlement, and fertile bay lands... What is it like there?"

"Hmm? The Prophet's guidance? A big bay? Fertile lands?..."

Listening to the translation, the old Hunter thought for a while, somewhat unsurely asking.

"Along the coast, heading east four to five hundred miles, there is indeed a big bay, a very large big bay!... As for the fertile bay land you've mentioned, whether it's the plains under the northern bay or the lake-dotted southern bay? ... I've rowed to both these bays. They're all warm climates, suitable for settlement, where pumpkins and beans can be grown in abundance... These two bay areas are dream fertile lands sought after by countless Northern tribes over a thousand miles!..."

At this, the old Hunter smiled, also showing longing. In later times, the North Bay area is around Vancouver in Canada, surrounded by mountains and sea, a warm valley. The South Bay area, on the other hand, is around the lake-filled bay of Seattle, likewise sheltered by eastern mountains, with plenty of lakes and fertile land.

However, such rare, plantable warm fertile lands, in the cold, harsh Northern Land, symbolize something every tribe understands!... The continuous struggle over these two fertile lands has lasted for hundreds, even thousands of years, never ceasing!

The old Hunter deeply observed Zuwaro for a moment, then smiled meaningfully.

"Shaman from the longship, your tribe's Prophet is powerful, with accurate prophecies! The fertile bay lands are indeed as you described, suitable for settlement..."

"The climate there is warm, impervious to cold waves, able to cultivate pumpkins and beans, even harvest some corn. The fish harvest, especially in the lakes of the southern bay, is plentiful... And where

there's food, there are certainly tribes! In this harsh Northern Land, the more stable and abundant the food production, the stronger the tribes that appear!"

"So, whether it's the North Bay or the South Bay, these territories coveted by countless tribes, are occupied by several, even dozens, of thousand-strong Great Tribes! The battles among these tribes are far fiercer than those of other tribes, as they are more warlike..."

"Friends from the longship! Your warriors are powerful, your spears and axes indeed sharp, your bows very strong, your armor robust... But there are simply too few of you!... If you wish to settle in the two eastern bays, you must be well-prepared... my advice would be not to go there! Especially not with so few people!..."

"Ancestors bear witness! The Prophet of your tribe, with immense power, and accurate prophecies! The fertile bay land is indeed as you described, suitable for settlement..."

"The bay area's climate is warm, immune to cold waves, and capable of growing pumpkins and beans, even yielding some corn. That area's fish catch, especially in the lakes of South Bay, is plentiful, with very fertile land. These two bay areas are coveted fertile lands, yearned for by thousands of tribes in the Northern regions over thousands of miles!"

However, such rare, cultivable fertile lands in a cold, deadly Northern Land indeed mean a lot, and no tribe is unaware! ... And the struggles and fights surrounding these two fertile lands have continued for hundreds, even thousands of years, never stopping!

The old Hunter took a deep breath and continued, confidently.

"Forefathers bear witness! You who have been endowed with prophecies of the Divine, truly understand well! The fertile bay land is as you say! Suitable for settlement..."

"Its climate is warm, it can't be easily chilled by cold fronts, pumpkins and beans can be grown, even corn can be harvested. The fish catch there is notable, especially in the southern bay's lakes, where the land is particularly fertile and abundant..."

"However, such a desirable warm fertile land, in a cold and deadly Northern Land, is something no tribe is unaware of! Even so, the struggles and battles among the numerous tribes for these fertile lands have gone on for hundreds, even thousands, of years without cease!"

"Ancestor witness! Your tribe's Prophet, with great Mana, has prophesized accurately! The fertile bay land is indeed as you described, suitable for settlement..."

"But, in both the North Bay and the South Bay, these lands long yearned by countless tribes have been occupied by several, even a dozen, thousand-strong Great Tribes! The strife among these tribes is far fiercer than that of other places' tribes, as they are more warlike..."

"Your tribe's warriors are brave, your Spears and Axes are indeed sharp, your Bow and Arrow very powerful, and Armor very resilient... but your numbers are few! ... If you wish to settle in the two eastern bays, you must be well-prepared... and my advice would be not to go! Don't go when you are few!..."

"Ancestors bear witness! Those greedy Great Tribes around the bays will undoubtedly target your ship and people, unlike us or other friendly tribes. They will think of devouring both your ship and people, just as they forced our Makah ancestors to migrate!"...

Chapter 1339: Arrival! Seattle Grand Seabay

The October autumn night carried a chill, and the wind in the Northern Land also had a hint of moisture. The rainy season was on the brink, and the flocks of wild geese had already migrated. The sky was vast, the sea roared, the night descended earlier, and the galaxy was clearer.

As night deepened, the two expedition leaders sat cross-legged by the fireplace, silently watching the flickering campfire, as if trying to discern some sign of fate.

Old Hunter Whale smiled, drank a cup of herbal tea, and went to the smoked meat area of the fishing village. Before resting, he had to carefully check the processing and storage of whale meat and arrange for hunters to stand guard throughout the night. After all, this was the food supply for the entire tribal village for a full month or two!

"Miki, what do you think?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro sipped his tea, watched the old hunter walk away, and then softly asked.

"What he said, is it true?"

"With the Chief Divine as my witness! Zuvaro, he has no reason to deceive us. As a whaling hunter who has been at sea for many years, these tales from afar should be his personal experiences, not hearsay..."

Scholar Mikki touched his chin, pondered slightly, and made a judgement.

"So, the vast bay in Your Majesty's prophecy might not be a suitable settlement for the fleet at present!..."

"Hmm. We thought the same."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro nodded, his face calm. His gaze flickered before he spoke softly.

"Miki, don't you think this whaling tribe is very fit to be the sailors of the fleet?..."

"Uh... ah? Zuvaro, what do you intend to do?"

Upon hearing this, Scholar Mikki was taken aback. He stared at his friend's face and spoke in a deep voice.

"With the Chief Divine as my witness! The further north we go, the more dangerous the waves. The fleet's sailors must go aboard willingly to be reliable!..."

"Haha! We think the same..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro chuckled awkwardly, then his expression became solemn.

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! Miki, I plan to establish another port for the Kingdom here, to create a new settlement!"

"Hmm? Here?"

Upon hearing this, Scholar Mikki was taken aback for a moment, calculated for a moment, and nodded slightly.

"Yes! This place is about 800 miles from North Port... It's time to build another supply port! However, this is the territory of the Whale Tribe, we must first seek the tribe's consent... It would be best to establish a blood oath alliance with them!..."

"Hmm. We think alike... I plan to leave a ship here, with fifty men. I will let my cousin Priest Zuyu oversee this place!"

"First Level Preaching Priest Zuyu? Alright, he is indeed quite reliable. Let it be him!"

During the entire northern journey of the exploration fleet, the origins of the priests aboard varied greatly. Some were from the Old Nobles of the Kingdom, some were from the Kingdom's commoners, some were orphans adopted by the Divine Revelation Place, and some managed to join through familial connections. In the view of the entire priestly class of the Kingdom, participating in the exploration fleet was a highly risky yet high opportunity pathway open to all! This path might not appeal to the nobility priests with better backgrounds, but for others, it was exceptionally precious...

And at this moment, only Xiuluo and those involved in the exploration knew: On this vast North-South Continent, how many unenlightened tribes awaited conversion, how much undeveloped land and minerals, and how many unknown possibilities and opportunities awaited!...

The flickering campfire reflected upon human hearts. Scholar Mikki pondered for a moment, suddenly noting Zuwaro's previous words.

"Zuwaro, you just mentioned leaving a ship?... Does that mean we will continue our sea voyage from this cape?... Where are we heading? The Great Island in the northwest, or the vast bay to the east?"

"With the Chief Divine as my witness! We go to the vast bay!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's expression was solemn as he made his decision.

"No matter what, we must take a look! To see the place in Your Majesty's prophecy!... Even if, we leave immediately after..."

"Alright! May the Chief Divine bless us!"

The two longships stayed for three days in the Makkan's Whale Tribe. During these three days, Scholar Mikki and Old Hunter Whale Hai established a preliminary mutual trust. Mikki, with an open expression, explained to the old hunter the purpose of the fleet while making gestures.

"...The Chief Divine guides us, bestowing the prophecy of Divine Revelation!... We will continue northwest, to the cold Far North land, seeking the new continent in the prophecy, along with new plants, animals, and tribes... to completely transform the entire world!..."

"Far North land... Distant northwest... Storms, surges, and snow..."

Old Hunter Whale Hai gazed at Mikki's demeanor, pondered for a while, and then softly sighed.

"Brave longship shaman! The prophecy of your prophet... is definitely not an easy path! May the Ancestor Spirit bless you!... As for your other requests..."

Upon this, Old Hunter Whale Hai showed a gentle smile.

"Our tribe's land is vast and shared together, enough to accommodate fifty strong men! Your longship is also large enough to serve as the lead ship and whale hunt with us! And this vast sea and land is big enough to accommodate both us and you, to accommodate two allied and mutually supportive tribes, and even in the future become a single..."

"So, I can swear an oath of alliance with you! Right in front of the tribe's totem pole, to swear with our ancestors in mind! However, what you mentioned about offering to the totem Chief Divine, we need to really see it to believe!"

"Alright! The great Chief Divine spreads the light! He will bring crops that can grow here, along with durable weapons and tools, and also cotton fabrics and firestones to keep the whole tribe warm..."

Scholar Mikki nodded gravely, promising.

"The Chief Divine will bring you change, all good changes! And witnessing all this, your change in faith will be sincere!"

"Hmm... I will watch closely and wait patiently..."

Two days later, the sacred alliance ceremony was held in the Whale Tribe's village, Scholar Mikki represented the Kingdom, and Old Hunter Whale Hai represented the Whale Tribe. The two swore an oath with blood, drank blood wine, ate raw whale meat, and pledged to be brothers. Thereafter, the exploration fleet set up a new Kingdom settlement, Whale Harbor, on the edge of the Whale Tribe's village. The other longship in the fleet was left behind; the crew built shacks and cellars to store whale meat, participating in the Makkans' whaling activities...

From then on, the vast exploration fleet was reduced to a single lonely flagship. It carried fifty people, along the towering coast, heading southeast to the vast bay.

The stretching snow-capped mountains appeared once more to the south of the longship. And rivers flowing from the mountains merged along the coast, one after another. The longship veered southeastward, sailed calmly through the strait for about four hundred miles, then once again saw the opening of a sea bay more than ten miles wide. Sailing into this wide opening towards the south, an endless vast sea bay abruptly appeared before everyone!

"Oh Chief Divine! This truly is... this is truly!... The prophecy of Your Majesty has been fulfilled once again!"

Although everyone anticipated it, seeing this prophesized vast bay with their own eyes still invoked an indescribable awe in all their hearts!

This expansive Seattle Bay was even larger and longer than Golden Bay! It stretched four to five hundred miles, invisible in both north and south, while it branched out in numerous tributaries from east to west, resembling an endlessly winding blue serpent. Countless big and small lakes shimmered like the sparkling scales on the serpent's body, or like the tear of the Goddess of Life, infusing the land with life!

"The orange-yellow sky, the shimmering lake surface. The clear bay, the dense pine forest. The verdant woods, the white distant mountains. And... the faintly visible tribal camps and smoke clouds!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro squinted, his expression turned wary. Now was the supper time, and several smoke trails rose from three sides of the longship. Such tribal density was almost rarely seen along their journey.

"Go! Head for the nearest smoke! Stay alert!..."

Soon, the longship approached a village of the local tribes. Scholar Mikki shifted his gaze, paused slightly at the village's central wooden longhouse, and looked towards several just-harvested pumpkin fields. He pondered briefly and drew a conclusion.

"Zuwaro, this tribe must have at least a thousand people!... It seems that there are many tribes here, just like we saw at Golden Bay!"

"Is that so... a tribe with at least a thousand people, as many as there were at Golden Bay! But..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro looked towards the village with its flickering figures, watched the densely packed shacks, and couldn't help but express his feelings.

"Oh Chief Divine! When we were at Golden Bay, we had ten longships, over five hundred samurai and sailors, capable of directly defeating any tribe! But now, we only have one ship, fifty people... Such strength is vastly different than before...!"

Chapter 1340: Half a Ton of Gold – What We Own and What We Seek

The sun dips westward, the bay filled with dazzling golden light, while the villages bustle with people. Everything seems peaceful and harmonious, seemingly different from what the old hunter had described.

Exploration Captain Zuwaro squints his eyes, carefully observing the appearance of the tribal village, estimating the organization level of these tribes. However, the serene scene is quickly shattered by alert cries from the fence of the village.

"There's a ship! On the Great Lake outside the village, there's a large ship!"

"What tribe is this from?"

"Don't know, but it's never been seen before!"

"Never seen before? Then they are enemies! Quick, grab your weapons!..."

The tribes here seem quite vigilant, the peculiar longship had only appeared for a moment before catching the attention of the tribespeople. The village erupts with shouts and commotion, soon two hundred hunters and able-bodied men pour out, each holding javelins and hunting bows. Then, a dozen tribal canoes are dragged to the seaside, carrying the hunters, aggressively approaching.

"Uh, this situation... Zuwaro, should we make contact with them?"

"Forget it! Let's leave immediately!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro thinks briefly and then shakes his head in denial.

"Chief Divine witnessed! Since we're not planning to establish a settlement here in this bay for now, contacting them doesn't have much meaning. Moreover, seeing their manner, they probably don't have good intentions..."

"Alright! Then let's quickly leave! I feel they seem to regard us as some invading hostile tribe..."

"Move!..."

The longship swiftly turns and rapidly accelerates, heading back to the bay's entrance. The local tribe's canoe flotilla pursues fervently for a quarter-hour! Until they chase out of the bay, the tribal huntsmen on the boat finally stop, shout something angrily, and then reluctantly turn the ship away. Everyone then slows down, exchanging bitter smiles.

"Ahem! The tribes here really are enthusiastic..."

"Haha! Chief Divine protect us!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro sets down the boat paddle, turns around, panting. Covered in sweat, staring at the warm, vast Seattle bay, his face shows a touch of inexplicable excitement and resolve.

"This is the place foretold by Your Majesty, a warm fertile land, also home to tens of thousands of primitive tribes!... Chief Divine witnessed! We will definitely return!"

"Zuvaro... you truly are... full of spirit..."

Scholar Mikki pants, bitterly smiling and shaking his head. At the moment, his thoughts of this bountiful bay filled with myriad tribes have temporarily ceased. He already has a clear understanding that for the major tribes surfaced from the Northern Land competition, comparable strength is the basis for dialogue. And before accumulating enough power, carrying so many covetous items, rashly contacting major tribes, might not be wise.

Thinking of this, Mikki pauses, asking with a deep voice.

"Zuvaro, what's the next plan? It's already late October, the rumored rainy season storms are about to hit!... Also, our ship still has half a ton of gold given by Your Majesty..."

"Hmm... late October... rainy season storms... half a ton of gold..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro muses for a while before conversing to speak.

"Mikki, let's first return to Whale Harbor. That's the northernmost port of the Kingdom and will also be the starting point for next year's exploration. We'll bury the half ton of gold in the cellar at Whale Harbor, since the Maca people aren't interested in gold..."

"Then, I think, we can divide into two teams!..."

"Ah! Divide into two teams? You mean, stationed separately in the north and south?..."

"Yes!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro shows a sincere smile on his face.

"Mikki, once we reach Whale Harbor, we'll have two longships. You take one southward, returning to West Mountain Port in the Golden Bay area... You have three main tasks, the most important first one is to dispatch personnel, pass the news from the Northern Land back layer by layer, and urgently seek the Kingdom's support forces..."

"Our fleet, after arriving here, the ships and reliable personnel are already somewhat lacking. We need more support, more ships! And more people, including bronze craftsmen and shipwrights!..."

"Good! Chief Divine bears witness! As soon as I return to West Mountain Port, I will immediately dispatch ships southward!"

Scholar Mikki nodded firmly and then continued to ask.

"What are the other two matters?"

"The second thing, talk to that old fox, Cedar Shaman, let West Mountain Port recruit more local tribes, and absorb some local tribal shipwrights. This port will be the rear for our next exploration phase. It's best to establish a shipyard first, store some large timber, and try to build some canoes first... When the kingdom's shipwrights arrive, new longships need to be built!... "

Exploration Captain Zuvaro looked to the south, thinking about the blank shipbuilding industry at various ports, he couldn't help but rub his brow. He took a long breath and then calmly and carefully instructed.

"We need to establish settlements and ports segment by segment, each section must leave behind personnel and ships. Mikki, after you return to West Mountain Port, first build or trade some canoes to leave for port use. Then after spring arrives next year, try to bring several longships over..."

"This winter, I will stay at Whale Harbor and join the Maka people in the whale hunt, storing more meat. In addition, if there is still an opportunity before the storm arrives, I also want to visit the Great Island in the northwest to see if there are warm and suitable ports, and if there are friendly tribes available for conversion... Then, have a chat with the locals, learn some polar living skills, and by the way, learn their language. Yes, learning the language is crucial! Not only do I have to learn, you have to learn, all priests have to learn!... Overall, there is a lot we can do. And the more we do now, the smoother the exploration will be later!... "

"The last thing is, when you head south from Whale Harbor, you have to pass through North Port of the Krasop people, South Port of the Kus people, and Lake Bay Port of the Wiyot people, to reach the West Mountain Port in Golden Bay... Let me see how the kingdom priests along the way are doing, and then record the number of tribes absorbed by each settlement... Our subsequent sailors may need to be drawn from the converted tribespeople!..."

"Oh! When passing through the battling Leaf Grass Tribe and Redwood Tribe, you must be careful. They are very large tribes, capable of mobilizing hundreds or thousands of able-bodied men. Seeing you with only one ship, they might have other thoughts... So, Mikki, you can move by day and rest by night, pass through quietly!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro carefully explained for a long time, only then did he finish speaking all the arrangements he had thought about along the way in his mind. Then, the two stood on the longship in the sunset, looking at the sky and lake filled with red clouds, and devoutly prayed together.

"Praise you, Supreme Main God! I pray for your protection, protect us, as we traverse the waves thousands of miles!..."

The solemn prayer ended, and the longship began its return westward. Scholar Mikki gazed at the falling sun over the sea, dazed in thought for a long time. After a while, he suddenly reached out his hand and grabbed the equally dazed Zuwaro.

"Zuwaro, I remembered! We have another major task we haven't done!"

"Huh? What? What else is there?"

"Prophecy! Your Majesty's prophecy! The second half of the prophecy!"

Scholar Mikki went down to the cabin, searched carefully for a while, and only then took out the two carefully preserved charts and prophecy from a chest full of gold.

"Uh? Mikki, didn't you say you would wait until we crossed the ocean west before looking at the second half of the prophecy?"

"Ahaha! Uh... I was really too curious, secretly peeked earlier... In fact, the second half of Your Majesty's prophecy not only speaks of after heading north in Golden Bay, before crossing the ocean, a gold mine must be found, a gold mine unprecedented, beyond imagination..."

Speaking, Scholar Mikki moved his finger and traced to the fourth segment of the spiritual sea chart, latitude 50 to 60 degrees north. Then, he heavily pointed between latitudes 55 to 60 degrees.

"Your Majesty said, within these 5 degrees, in a bay of two thousand miles, there will be a flowing Gold River, a bay full of gold mines, countless shining gold stones, at least hundreds of tons, millions of pounds of gold..."

"Chief Divine bears witness! Your Majesty even gave this place a name, called it... Oh! The Juneau Major Gold Mining District!..."

"Huh? What? Major Gold Mining District in the far north?... Jewel?... Uh, what use is there for so much gold? We already have half a ton on the ship... In this poor northern land, gold can't even buy a mouthful of food..."

"Your Majesty said, these things can drive the tribes across the sea mad! As long as they know... By then, they will come rowing to find us, regardless of all dangers!..."

The sea wind blew across the long-sailed oar-sail ship, blowing the legend of gold and disdain into the boundless ocean. And the roaring sea wind, following the same latitude, went to the other side of the ocean, to the equally vast, yet colder North Asian coast.

The desolate North Asian coast, everywhere are towering mountains and deep forests. And between the coastal forests and rivermouths, there is a campsite of a hunting tribe. In this simple yet warm camp, there are many strong and fierce hunters, tame rough-horned reindeer, and dogs barking at the seaside. And what marks these tribespeople's identity are the uniquely styled, even somewhat adorable deer head hats, or "roebuck head hats."

"Woof! Woof! Woof woof!..."

Looking in the direction of the barking dogs, a 200-ton Ocean Shielding Ship is docked by the tribe's camp by the sea. And at this moment, on the deck of this Ocean Shielding Ship, a Samurai with a month period head frowned, looking at the vast northern sea, heaved a deep sigh.

"Ah! Busy for half a year, braving the waves heading north... The Family Head's task, only this last one remains... What a pity! Where can there be sand gold that can be exchanged?... Even a few grams would be good..."