

## Civilization 1411

Chapter 1411: Xiulote's "Dragon Slaying Technique": Economy and Thought

"Of course, the conquest of the lowlands, the central, and even the highlands of the Maya, delving into the tropical jungle's interior, is destined to be an extremely arduous process! And the primary goal for the coming years is still to subdue the important coastal City-States, opening the sea route to Cuba! ... As long as we can make the Chieftains of the Maya subjugate and pay tribute, even nominally, this major strategy can be considered initially successful!..."

"As for the remnants of the former Mayapan Royalty, the remaining Kekum... They once ruled the vast lowlands and central Maya regions, with traditional proclamations over the independent Chieftain countries... They have already converted to the Chief Divine, relying on the Kingdom's Force, they are a political force that can be utilized and nurtured to control the deep jungle!..."

The lake surface glittered with Golden Light, the mountain colors reflected in the red sunset. The setting sun shone on the blue sea, and many boats approached the emerald bay. On the southern side of Lake Sacrifice City, relying on the bay corner of Sacrificial Lake, a natural lake harbor was formed. Xiulote led his generals, striding up the lake harbor to rest in the City-State's water fortress. And a sumptuous banquet was already prepared.

The banquet outside Lake Sacrifice City was sumptuous and delicious, without much external disturbance. Corn kernels with turkey chunks, added with chili peppers and spices, stewed into a rich and aromatic soup, is the traditional Pozole (Pozole/ pozolli) of the Mexica Alliance. And roasted tender grasshoppers smeared with chili powder, served with tortillas and avocado paste, are the seaside appetizer insect snacks (Chapulines). Cool chayote and zucchini, chopped and mixed with precious honey, then sprinkled with some herbs or chili powder, is a beloved cold dish of the noble Samurai. As for the post-meal fruits, besides the seaside's common golden pineapples, there are also papayas, a specialty of the New Continent. In fact, around Lake Sacrifice City, there is a particular kind of red-fleshed papaya, with thin skin and tender flesh, exceedingly sweet and rich in taste!

"Hmm, not bad! Soft and juicy, sweet without being cloying... It's a pity, once you leave here, you can't find it anymore! In this hot seaside, every scattered City-State has special rural products! Just like the golden pineapples of Golden Bay City..."

Xiulote, having eaten some red-fleshed papaya, voiced his satisfied exclamation. With the transportation capability of this era, fresh and sweet tropical fruits like this can only be picked and eaten locally, almost impossible to transport three hundred Li away. And due to the tropical Central America climate conditions, the cost of ice making is truly too high, rendering it impossible to extend the storage period.

"Your Highness! If you like this fruit... I will arrange fast ships to transport it to Golden Bay City day and night, regularly!"

"Haha! Black Wolf, my Great General, you are considerate! But my reflection is inspired by this fruit, yet not only about the fruit..."

Xiulote laughed as he shook his head. He reached out to pick up a piece of fragrant and soft papaya, feeling the unmodified thin skin that was unsuitable for transportation or storage with a somewhat profound gaze.

"Black Wolf, Tupa, Chief Divine witness!... In this hot lowland seaside, moist and warm all year round, the jungle blocks the land. Various perishable agricultural products find it difficult to trade across City-States. Therefore, every large City-State becomes the economic center within dozens or hundreds of Li, hosting the large market inside and outside the City-State!"

"The villagers and Tribespeople of each Tribe all head to the surrounding City-States, exchanging local rural and tribal farm products, naturally forming closed trade circles... And this fragmented geographical environment and closed trade exchange are the economic basis for the loose division of Totonac City-States!..."

"What? Uh... Thorny chick?... Your Highness... This..."

"Black Wolf, Tupa, listen carefully!... Chief Divine witness! I said before, to govern a place, one must understand the meaning of military, political, economic, and thought, as well as their relationships in the world!... I previously spoke about the most urgent issues of military and political conquest and rule... But to establish stable Kingdom governance in the long run, we must further establish stable economic links and integrate the cultural thoughts of each Tribe!..."

Xiulote bit a mouthful of papaya, wiping the blood-like red juice from the corner of his mouth. Then he used the Stone Knife from his hand to precisely delineate the thousand-Li coast of the Seaside Lands in the soft earth.

"Military is the continuation of politics, economic systems are the foundation of politics, thoughts are the unification of politics, adapting on the economic systems' foundation. So-called economic systems,

simply put at this time, are both the production capacity of the populace and the capacity for transportation and trade in various places, the output, transfer, and distribution of Wealth!..."

Speaking of these Dragon Slaying Techniques taught in later generations, Xiulote's eyes revealed a hint of reminiscing. He once regarded this dry and clunky political and ideological philosophy with disdain, not giving it much thought. But only after truly mastering the power of the country did he gradually find that this fundamental political history education, this Dragon Slaying Secret Technique inherited by the ruling class, which would later be broadly taught by the Celestial Empire and known by everyone, was indeed amazing!

"The most important governance strategy in the Kingdom along the Seaside Lands is to unite the Tribespeople of each Tribe, establishing centralized rural villages and tribal flag teams!... And for any Tribal Chief who dares to resist or oppose this policy, their only outcome is sacrificial death!..."

"And the reason I set forth this policy is not merely to politically wrest the Tribespeople from the hands of the tribal leaders and Chieftains, incorporating them into the Kingdom's control... The deeper two goals are, economically, to introduce the Kingdom's more advanced agricultural production methods, to increase the output of village farmlands... and in thought, to spread the faith in the Chief Divine, inherit the Kingdom's epics, forcibly integrate the cultures of each Tribe!..."

Xiulote assumed a solemn expression, slowly inserting the Stone Knife in his hand into the earth. He then unyieldingly instructed the several trusted Great Generals with an indisputable tone.

"To establish a stable governance of the Kingdom, a reliable class must be chosen, building common economic and political interests! The Samurai and elites of the Totonac are the aids to our rule, and they must also be incorporated into the political and economic systems..."

"The political system of the Kingdom along the Seaside Lands, and even in the entire realm, is fundamentally based on agriculture and war, with workshops providing armament, commerce serving as a link, and faith sustaining stability. The so-called 'agriculture' refers to the feudal distribution of land to Samurai farms, the continuous establishment of rural flag teams, and the popularization of agricultural improvements, new tools, and new crops... The so-called 'war' refers to the continuous wars of expansion, constantly bringing land, population, and Wealth, continually absorbing surrendered armies, continuing conquests abroad, then awarding military merits and accepting new recruits!..."

Chapter 1412: Xiulote's "Dragon Slaying Technique": Agriculture, Warfare, Workshops, Commerce, and Culture

"'Farming' and 'warfare,' the ever-expanding Kingdom will provide the samurai and elites from each tribe with vast opportunities for advancement! The lower classes of the Kingdom can rise, stepping into the ranks of those who govern... and military service is their most significant path to ascent!"

"Therefore, the samurai submitting by the seaside will, like those of the Highland, occupy one of the most critical poles in the Kingdom's politics, perhaps even more prosperously! As for the other pole of politics, it will be the priests selected from the commoners and elites to develop each City-State and village, balancing with the samurai. Beyond this, the newly established seaside government office, managed by the cultural bureaucracy, and the existence of state-run craftsmen and trade caravans, represent a new, emerging third pole transferred from the balance of the previous two poles..."

Xiulote skillfully moved a stone knife, depicting three small figures in the soil: the samurai holding long spears, the priest holding an emblem, and the official with an abacus. Among these three ruling classes, the samurai wield the greatest force, the priests hold the next position, while the officials have just begun to appear.

"This political and economic system, this foundation for interest distribution and transfer, first depends on the military power suppressed by the Kingdom, and then on the Drawing in of the elites from each tribe!... The new samurai class, granted land and agricultural slaves, the new Chief God Priests given power, and the officials emerging in the centralization, all represent the ruling roots extending and growing from the Kingdom's Divine Tree..."

"'Farming' and 'warfare,' the maintenance of military power, and the distribution of power... On such a foundation of the Kingdom, balance the samurai, priests, and officials, continue waging wars and farming, constantly expanding territory and population, gradually increasing output and wealth!... This is the overall route of the Kingdom, and also the only path for us to advance!"

"On this path, as long as we can progress, expand, and increase land, population, and wealth... all internal conflicts within the Kingdom can be resolved! The assimilation and integration of tribes across the world can also rapidly proceed through expansion!... However, if we halt, without undergoing another bloody reform, or even more cruel innovations..."

Xiulote stopped at this point, without delving deeper into those possible political blueprints for the future. In reality, he had no mature plan, no so-called perfect method to cope with the future if the expansion of the military system reached its limit.

At this moment, he was like riding high atop a North American Wild Buffalo, with no reins to slow down, only charging forward like a mad bull... He could only lead the warriors and priests of the Kingdom, racing forward vigorously, to break through all obstacles ahead!

As for the future after running to the extreme... He might draw on the experiences of the Old Continent, attempting to guide the various classes of the Kingdom through gradual increases in productivity, 'crossing the river by feeling the stones.' Of course, all this presupposes he can always stand at the top position in the Kingdom...

"Beyond the foundation of farming and warfare, the 'workshops' with the Divine Revelation Place administered by the state, focus on papermaking and printing, shipbuilding, glass firing, copper and iron smelting, and gunpowder weapons production... The workshops at the Divine Revelation Place, the wealth and armaments they create, are also our strongest support to suppress the various tribes under heaven!..."

"So-called 'commerce,' at present, is predominantly large-scale state-operated trade and small-scale rural trade. The former focuses on the lucrative strategic materials and luxury goods, prioritizing the needs of the military and the nobility. The latter involves daily necessities like agricultural products, pottery, and cotton cloth, maintaining the needs of the commoners' daily lives..."

"Another significant task of the Kingdom's state-run commerce is to build a huge fleet, economically linking all the coastal City-States into one... Based on this, you need to have a clear understanding of the importance of the East Sea Navy! From the foundational craftsmen and timber, to the samurai who fight at sea, and the talents who command naval warfare, all must be prioritized!"

"As for the final culture, faith, and thought..."

At this point, Xiulote pondered for a long time. Under the solemn attention of everyone, his voice gradually lowered, only the closest three Great Generals could hear.

"The Divine Descendants from every tribe, their beliefs, their culture... need to be broken, transformed, and finally fully unified! As for the main body of unification, naturally, it will be primarily the culture of the Mexica, faith in the Chief Divine, then integrating each tribe's myths, legends, heroic spirits, and saints... finally unified as one, propagated throughout the world in the name of the Jiao People's epic!"

"The foundation for this cultural and faith integration currently relies on our Mexica people's invincible and indomitable military power! The fame and myth of the Mexica legion is our most powerful force for ruling and intimidating the tribes! The newly submitted Tribal Armies follow orders, and the tribes' chieftains and headmen dare not resist... precisely because the combined military power of the Alliance and the Kingdom can suppress all rebellions!"

"So, under no circumstances can internal conflict occur within the current Alliance and Kingdom! Politically speaking, we cannot let internal contradictions affect the expansion of the Alliance and the Kingdom! Otherwise, once the path to unification of the world is interrupted, restoring the current situation would take an unknown number of years..."

"Economically speaking, if an internal war were to break out in Mexica, unable to gain lands, population, and wealth from external wars... then the military merit system for the warriors would collapse suddenly! And this would be a severe blow to the morale and combat power of the Legion Warriors... unless we treat each of the Mexica provinces as an enemy nation to plunder, damaging our own foundation..."

"And from a philosophical standpoint, once an internal war occurs, with Mexica legions fighting against each other, even being defeated by newly formed Tribal Armies... then the fame and myth of the Mexica would shatter in the conquered people's hearts!... If such a situation arises, the path to integrating the cultural and ideological landscapes of the world would indeed become a distant endeavor..."

After conveying these well-considered "Dragon Slaying Techniques," Xiulote took a deep breath and finished a cup of sweet and sour pineapple wine. He then looked towards the three Great Generals at the front; Ecatl was contemplative, Black Wolf widened his eyes, and Tupa stared blankly without speaking. Beside them, the scribe Yilian, was diligently writing with admiration filled in her eyes.

"Politics, military, economy, thought... the various planning of seaside governance, the advancing route of the Kingdom, are all here! With the Chief Divine's blessing, taking advantage of this excellent circumstance and timing, we must seize the time to advance, doing everything possible to move forward!"

Xiulote smiled slightly, delivering the final conclusion of this teaching on "Dragon Slaying Techniques." Subsequently, he looked towards Black Wolf Torc, who was bewildered yet excited, and inquired in a deep voice.

"Black Wolf!"

"Huh? Your Highness?"

"The waterside fort on the eastern side of the Great Divine Mountain, the one detaining Tikalo... has it been captured?"

"The waterside fort on the eastern side of the Divine Mountain?... Oh! Chief Divine witness! The Kingdom's legion has already taken it!"

"Excellent!"

Xiulote nodded, squinting his eyes, looking towards the black expanse of the Sacrificial Lake, and also towards the shadow of the Divine Mountain, indistinct in the dark night. After a moment of gaze, he decisively ordered.

"I heard it's actually an ancient Olmec relic, later converted into a waterside fort... and that Papu Priest hails from the Feathered Serpent Priesthood..."

"Chief Divine witness! Dispatch an envoy as soon as possible to negotiate his surrender! The Kingdom Legion is about to besiege the Hidden Serpent Holy City... and the bargaining chips in his hand are currently few!"

"Since he wants to meet me personally, I will bring the Imperial Guard Legion there to wait for him! Listen to his tales of ancient myths, and see what kind of person he is, and where he should be assigned..."

"Hahaha! Whether he's a hero or a bear, a fox or a mole rat, we have to take a proper look first!"

#### Chapter 1413: Forest Wolf and Papu, Old Friends Reunited

The red sun set in the west, reflecting the sunset over the sea and dyeing the jungle along the coast. Among the coastal jungles, the wide Tonalá River mirrored the lush green forests along the way, with golden waves gently floating on its surface. The long river traversed the dense jungle, flowing through a busy, hidden tribal village, and then northward into the vast expanse of the Gulf of Mexico.

In the Navajo language, "Tonalá" means "the place where the sun rises." Therefore, the "Tonalá River" can also be called the "Sunrise River." At the river's mouth, the "Tonalá Village," located eighty miles east of Hidden Serpent City, is also known as "Sunrise Village." The Tonalá Sunrise River flows from south to north, meandering over six hundred miles. It is not only the natural boundary between the future Veracruz State and Tabasco State but also one of the early water routes connecting the Mexican Gulf and the Pacific Coast.

From the north side of the Gulf of Mexico, traveling upstream from the river's mouth of the Sunrise River for sixty to seventy miles, you reach the second ancient city ruins from the Olmec Era, La Venta, more than two thousand years ago. A further two to three hundred miles upstream to the south, you find the ancient sacrificial city-state of the Zoque tribes in the forests, with its heritage over seven hundred years, called Malpasito. Southward beyond Malpasito, after passing the vast Great Lake (Malpaso), another two to three hundred miles leads to the sacred source of the Sunrise River—an ancient city thriving for over a thousand years during the Classical Maya era, called Chiapa de Corzo!

Thus, this over six hundred-mile-long Sunrise River is connected at one end to the ancient city of the Olmec era and at the other end to the ancient city of the Classical Maya era. Influenced by both Olmec and Maya cultures, it naturally produces forest and jungle dwellers blending characteristics of both cultures, the semi-Maya Zoque tribes of the mountain forests.

The source of the Sunrise River, around the area of Chiapa de Corzo, is likely in the higher regions of the central Chiapa Highlands. From there, the river's flow changes direction from south to north, turning into a north to south flow, converging with the southern part of the Grijalva River system. From here, it also marks the second half of the water route that links the Mexican Gulf to the Pacific Coast. In fact, from the Grijalva River system surrounding Chiapa de Corzo towards the Pacific coast, the shortest river is less than four hundred miles long!

In summary, the route from the Sunrise River—La Venta Ancient City—Malpasito—Chiapa de Corzo—Grijalva River, spanning over a thousand miles, is the shortest path connecting the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coastal regions in Central America!

Beginning from the Classical Maya era, this thousand-mile waterway became a flourishing trade route, connecting goods and merchandise among Highland Tribes, Coastal Tribes, Cloud Central Tribes, and the Maya Tribes. However, five hundred years ago, when the Maya Tribes declined, this thousand-mile waterway fell into the hands of the forested Zoque tribes, losing the prosperous trade of the classical era...



"Chief Divine witness! Papu! You have stationed the Hidden Serpent City's naval forces at this Sunrise River water fort... Are you so foolish, so reckless, that you wish to ally with the Zoque tribes in the southern Chiapa highlands? Or have leaves blinded you into siding with the Maya city-states on the eastern coast?!"

In the large wooden house of the water fort in Sunrise Village, the slanting sunset cast its dim and reddish glow inside. Forest Wolf Mayakun stood upright and tall, with his back to the red sunset, like a shadow of the sun. He squinted his eyes, full of momentum, glaring at Papu Priest like a hungry coyote.

"Ahem! Forest Wolf, my old friend, don't get agitated..."

"Papu! I bear the commands of His Majesty from the Death God Temple and Black Wolf Leader, to ask you one last time! When exactly will your naval forces surrender?..."

Upon meeting an old friend, Papu Priest smiled warmly, while Forest Wolf Mayakun's face was filled with ferocity. At this moment, though he was alone in Papu's water fort, his words were undeniably threatening.

And what gave him such confidence was not only the emerald-green Mexica Camp Commander's uniform he wore and the Sun Hummingbird Chief God's Amulet around his neck, but also his distinguished status as an envoy of His Majesty from the Death God Temple and Black Wolf Marshal, along with the Kingdom Legion vanguard sixty miles to the west!

"Uh... Forest Wolf, my old friend... How could I be so unwise as to ally with those Zoque hiding in the mountain forests, or capitulate to the weak, divided Maya city-states? Chief Divine witness! I vowed my soul early on to the supreme and mighty Chief Divine! And my allegiance long ago offered to the mighty and revered His Majesty from the Death God Temple..."

Faced with Forest Wolf's relentless rebuke and questioning, Papu Priest kept his grin intact without showing any dissatisfaction. After a brief thought, he lowered his head, personally pouring Forest Wolf a full glass of the precious Xtabentún, a rare honey vanilla wine originating from Eastern Red Lake Town. This honey wine's peculiarity lies in its use of the sweet nectar extracted from the fragrant plant Xtabentún's white blossoms, endowing the honey wine with a wondrous taste and unique aroma, favored by Coastal Priests!

"Hoo! Nice, delicious!... Fill it up!"

Forest Wolf Mayakun opened his mouth wide and gulped down the precious Xtabentún in one go. Seeing this bold style of drinking, Papu Priest's eyes flickered, and his movements hesitated. After a moment of hesitation, he still lowered his head to refill Forest Wolf another large glass of honey wine!

"Haha! Delicious! Hiccup!..."

"Uh... Forest Wolf, do you want more?"

"Of course! What, Papu, are you feeling stingy?"

"...No... no..."

"Haha! More!..."

Seeing the stammering Papu Priest, Forest Wolf laughed heartily, glass after glass. This tasty honey wine was something he seldom drank before. Coming from the Eastern Maya lands, it was very expensive, circulating only around Hidden Serpent City.

Meanwhile, the expression on Papu Priest's face changed, not because he was heartbroken over the preciousness of this mead. It's just that as a favorite among Maya and Hidden Serpent City priests, K'utabon'ton mead has a significant calming effect, even a slight trance effect, making it easier to communicate with the Divine. If consumed too much...

"Haha!... Papu! Since you've made up your mind, surrender quickly!... Don't be like a water beetle, swimming around aimlessly in the pond, unable to make up your mind like a woman!... Hic!... "

"Hmm... Divine witness! Forest Wolf, water beetles may not necessarily be aimless, swimming in circles! They might also sway back and forth, mistaking the reflection of the sun in the water as their own!..."

Hearing Forest Wolf's mockery, Papu Priest smiled and refilled Forest Wolf's cup with K'utabon'ton mead. Then he looked at Forest Wolf, who was swaying his head and clearly a bit dazed, and said with a smile.

"Forest Wolf, those water lily beetles are envoys of the River God. They run swiftly across the water's surface, faster than any small boat in the world!..."

"Uh? Water beetles? Swaying back and forth?... Water lily beetles? Those little lice-like things?... Haha! What a bunch of nonsense! Only you priests of these fake gods would worship some little bugs in the water! A true Coastal Samurai should be like a Coyote, running and pouncing in the jungle!..."

Forest Wolf Mayakun, feeling hazy, shook his head vigorously, trying to clear his mind. But the effect of this mead far surpassed its taste, containing more than just alcohol...

"Damn it! Is this wine this strong? Come on, fill me up again! I don't believe it... Hic!... His Highness's Royal Banner has already reached Lake Sacrifice City, even standing tall on the towering Great Divine Mountain!... Papu, the mighty Highness awaits your audience, and it is both your most precious and final chance! If you can't handle your samurai, let me bring my camp, and we'll sacrifice all those disobedient Hidden Serpent City samurai in one go!..."

"Damn it! If you ask me, His Highness from the Death God Temple is too merciful! Why give you a chance to surrender? It's only sixty-some li!... Divine witness! With one camp, I can march and strike swiftly, and in just one night, I can wipe you all out! Awoo!..."

Forest Wolf, with a thick tongue and increasingly dazed eyes, even started howling. Seeing this wolf-like wanton craziness, Papu Priest pursed his lips, and his eyes gradually filled with killing intent. Silently watching Forest Wolf, his hand unknowingly pressed against the obsidian dagger at his waist for sacrifice.

"Haha! The Coastal Legion will soon be formed! I, Forest Wolf Mayakun, will become the Thousand-man Camp Commander of the Kingdom Legion, officially accepted by the Kingdom!... Haha! So what even if the Chief Priest of Hidden Serpent Holy City is nothing?! Even if I lose the position of Coyote City Lord, so what?!... As long as I follow Black Wolf Leader to pacify the Maya city-states on the Eastern Coast... Haha! Everything I lost before can be taken back with interest! Awoo!..."

At that very moment, Forest Wolf suddenly turned his head, staring at his silent old friend, seemingly with some sort of beastly intuition. He widened his eyes, looking fiercely at Papu Priest like he was eyeing an easy prey. Then, he first let out a dangerous howl, followed by a wild, unrestrained laugh.

"Awoo! Papu! Either surrender or die! Hahaha!..."

"...Ah!..."

Hearing Forest Wolf's threatening words and seeing his arrogant posture, Papu Priest remained silent for a moment, then suddenly sighed silently. And with that sigh, he seemed to suddenly lose all the accumulated strength and hidden killing intent.

"Divine witness! Forest Wolf, you don't need to worry! I still have control over my Naval Forces... When I lead the Naval Forces to surrender to His Highness, your share of the credit will also be included! We've been old friends among the coastal tribes; we should take care of each other... Hmm, Forest Wolf? Forest Wolf?! Are you pretending... Cough! Forget it, he must be drunk. Chuchut, escort him to a nearby side room to rest! Be careful, don't let those Hidden Serpent City warrior leaders see..."

"Yes! Lord Priest!"

Chieftain Chuchut nodded respectfully and supported Forest Wolf Mayakun as he walked out of the big wooden house. The last light of the sunset transformed from a deep red to distant shadows. And a low voice, spoken in the last breath of the sunset, came from behind him, not knowing if it was meant for him or someone else.

"Chuchut, remember!... "

"From today on, don't call me Lord Priest. I'm no Feathered Serpent Priest... Call me Papu Leader!..."

Upon hearing this, Chieftain Chuchut was suddenly taken aback. In the evening shadows, he paused, not turning back to look at Papu's expression. He simply held the drunken Forest Wolf, feeling the other's heaving heartbeat, and quietly nodded.

"Yes! Papu Leader!... May the Chief Divine protect us!..."

#### Chapter 1414: Surrender Is Also an Art

"Papu Chieftain, the Mexica envoy has already rested."

The sunset had completely faded away, and the dark sky enveloped the seaside. A bonfire was lit in the large wooden house of the village, cooking two fresh sea fish and two hard old corns. In this era, eating calorie-deficient sea or river fish never meant abundance. And when the leader of an army can only eat fish to satiate hunger, it often means that the food in the army is running low.

"The Mexica envoy? Ha! This Forest Wolf guy, being the tribe chief of Eastern Totonac, once clamored for fighting the Mexica to the death for the glory of all gods! But now, after surrendering, he dons a Mexica war clothes and speaks of the Chief Divine's blessing, proud to serve the Mexica..."

The Papu Priest reached out, took an old corn from the clay pot, eating slowly with a hint of disdain on his face. Yet shortly after, thinking of his own situation, his expression restrained, and he couldn't help but sigh.

"The storm sweeps in, the tide surges... In the face of such overwhelming Divine Might, how can mere mortals grasp their own fate!..."

Upon hearing this, Chuchut, the chieftain, also sighed. He held a wooden bowl, fetching out a sea fish, leaving the more filling corn for the Papu Priest. For the past two years, he led the people of Snake Lake Village, fleeing east with the Papu Priest, even reaching the farthest east of these seaside lands. However, the Mexica legion relentlessly followed them, like a tidal wave about to drown him once again, coming right in front.

"Chief Divine bless! Chieftain, this Forest Wolf is your old friend... Don't you need his help with so many warriors from Hidden Serpent City in the naval forces?"

"Ha! Old friend? I dare not claim to be his old friend! You should know, his hands are stained with the blood of his old friends!"

The Papu Priest curled his lips and shook his head. When talking about what Forest Wolf had done, his face showed both disgust and vigilance, as if speaking of a ruthless and unscrupulous mad dog.

"After the fall of Golden Bay City, Forest Wolf was captured and defected to the Mexica. This was nothing unusual; many submitted to the strong when circumstances demanded... But he personally acted, took a blood oath for conversion, and sacrificed numerous Divine Descendant Nobility from Coyote City, which equated to completely betraying his tribe of origin! Furthermore, he exposed the Rabbit Hill City Chieftain Yoltzin's rebellion plot, leading to Yoltzin's heart being separated from his body, sacrificed on the altar of Golden Bay City... And this was his very close friend through marriage! These two acts made him thoroughly become a Mexica wolf dog!"

"Later, he participated in the sacrifice of the Ke Shi City Grand Chief, his old friend Teotlara, then led the vanguard to break through Ke Shi City, working himself to the bone for the Mexica! Now, he comes as some Kingdom envoy, risking his life to persuade me to surrender... Ha! If I really let him help, lead his warrior camp into the water fortress... At that time, will my head also become his achievement? That is really uncertain!"

At this point, the Papu Priest laughed at himself, touching his own great head. Then, squinting his eyes, he looked towards the west, his voice gradually sinking.

"Moreover, in the seaside lands, those chieftains who have defected to the Mexica, controlling various warrior camps... like Wood Gecko from Five Mountains City, Red Ear from Feathered Serpent City, Kuikama from Earth River City, Toqina from Rabbit Hill City, and Mayakun from Coyote City... These Totonac surrendered armies probably wouldn't be pleased to have another me coming to share the already limited military authority and competing for that Coastal Legion Warrior Camp Chief position!"

"Ah? Coastal Legion? Warrior Camp Chief?"

Hearing this, Chuchut, the chieftain, showed surprise. He knew little about the news of the Mexica and couldn't understand the struggles among the surrendered armies. He thought for a while, asking with confusion.

"Papu Chieftain! Aren't we the naval forces? We're not competing for the lands with these folks on land... We've all made up our minds to strive for the coastal Maya Lands... Why should they worry about us?"

"Hmm. Chuchut, you're right! Our best way out, naturally, is to join the East Sea Navy of the Kingdom and venture to the Maya Coast of the East, seeking a foothold! But alas, even saying it out loud, they might not believe. Moreover, the tribal warriors in the naval forces probably don't want to go too far from home..."

The Papu Priest stroked his chin, his expression rarely showing hesitation.

"The best and most suitable land is of course the prosperous Red Lake Town, more than two hundred li to the east, that vast Red Lake Rivermouth. But can it succeed, and can it be our turn, I have no confidence at all... And if going further east by one or two hundred li, the Bay Mouth Town at the Great River (Grijalva River) Rivermouth is also good... If going further east, then there's only the shrimp-abundant Shrimp Lake."

The Papu Priest stood there, pondering for a while. He had diligently studied the situation on the Eastern Coast for a long time and inquired many Mayan merchants and sailors to comprehend thoroughly. In fact, if the Mexica's Temple to the God of Death did not appear, unwilling to accept his surrender personally... his last option would be to lead the naval forces eastwards, seeking allegiance from coastal Maya city-states!

"Alas! It ultimately depends on the Mexica Highness! We must bring the entire naval forces over, bringing all the shipwrights, to increase the weight of our surrender..."

The Papu Priest murmured, pacing back and forth. Then he suddenly paused, looking at the wooden house with only two people, lowered his voice to ask.

"Chuchut, among our dependable core members, how much of the naval forces can we control?"

"Hmm... Chieftain, it depends on where we are going..."

Chuchut, the chieftain, cautiously looked around and replied softly.

"The entire Naval Forces comprise more than two thousand people! Currently in our hands, there are about five to six hundred warriors and sailors from various tribes that migrated east. The warrior militia from various city-states and villages are estimated to be around five to six hundred as well. However,

the true main force is the Hidden Serpent City warriors, approximately one thousand two hundred to three hundred people, all of whom are adept at battles on the water!"

"Chief Divine bless us! We have stationed the Naval Forces here and severed the connection between the Holy City and the water fortress under the pretense of a Mexica attack. It has been over a month... The reason why these warrior leaders have tacitly accepted our actions is not because they have betrayed their tribes and completely abandoned Hidden Serpent City..."

"On one hand, they are unwilling to follow Hidden Serpent City's orders, to give up their positions within the fleet to transport the families and belongings of the Divine Descendant Nobility, aiding these cowards in fleeing... On the other hand, it's due to the rumors we spread earlier, that you have connected with the Maya city-states and are planning a good route for everyone..."

"So, if we go east to the Maya Lands in the East, there won't be much opposition within the fleet... But if we head west to side with the Mexica... I'm afraid the Hidden Serpent City warriors will not obediently follow the orders!..."

Hearing this, the Papu Priest furrowed his brows and carefully reaffirmed.

"Hmm? Chuchut, you have always been dealing with these warrior leaders... Are you sure they really do not want to side with the Mexica? Even in such dire circumstances..."

"Uh... Boss, as you know, not to mention the blood feuds from the prolonged battles, and whether the Mexica would seek revenge... Just the reputation of the Mexica, fueled by relentless propaganda from the Hidden Serpent City priests, has entrenched such a... "

"Such a what?..."

Leader Chuchut pursed his lips, put down the remaining half of the sea fish in his hand. He swallowed and, staring at the fish head that died with eyes open, cautiously replied.

"They are regarded simply as the incarnations of volcanic demons from the underworld, an Evil Demon Army that devours tribal souls! When they slaughter Divine Descendant priests and noble warriors, it is as ruthless and cold as pulling out weeds. And when they eat us, it's akin to how we eat fish! If not



absolutely forced, who would voluntarily surrender to them and accept such harsh constraints from body to faith? Would it mean truly abandoning all gods and ancestors, discarding the soul after death?..."

"Ah, I see! These warriors, whose minds have been marinated by Hidden Serpent priests, do not understand the true Mexica. Regarding everything about the Mexica, they are filled with an inherent, indoctrinated, blind fear and hatred... Only when they are forced to convert to the Chief Divine and break the clay pot of thought, can they open their eyes and attain...'rebirth'..."

The Papu Priest squinted his eyes, tightened his hands, and then released them. After a long moment of contemplation, he gritted his teeth resolutely.

"All Gods bless us! Chief Divine bless us! Opportunities are fought for! Even if there is only one branch, we will fight for the entire tree!..."

"Given the current situation, if we can lead the entire fleet over and hand it to the Mexica's hands... Everything else will be out of our control, and even the warriors on the ships can't decide! Of course, the most crucial are the twelve large ships and the dozens of Mayan and Totonac shipwrights capable of building large ships..."

"Twelve large ships? Boss, we only have seven large ships, where do the twelve come from..."

"Ha! The five that were under construction before, are more than half completed, just lacking the upper decks and sails... But it's okay if they don't have upper decks, as long as the side oar sails are there and can paddle out! Anyway, we are going to surrender, not to fight, so bring everything that can move along!..."

The Papu Priest clapped his hands, his gaze turning sharp and resolute.

"Six hundred core warriors and sailors. Bring along the other five to six hundred tribe members, and firmly control the twelve large ships! As for the one thousand plus main force from Hidden Serpent City, arrange them on the small boats. As for the narrative..."

"Hmm... Chuchut, I do have an idea! Let's do it like this, like this..."

"Ah! Boss?!"

"What, is it unworkable?"

"Uh! This... It really is a good plan! Except your reputation afterward..."

"Haha! What reputation do I have? Let's just survive first!..."

Before night fell, the Papu Priest laughed heartily. He finished the last bite of Old Corn, looked at the boundless sea under the moonlight, and let out a long sigh.

"Ah! A ruined reputation might not be such a bad thing either... I might also have to throw myself heart and soul to the Mexica like Forest Wolf, with no retreat left!..."

Chapter 1415: Desperate "Raid

June marks the rainy season by the seaside, where strong winds sweep dark clouds, accompanied by the drizzling rain, surging from the northern sea. Beyond the water village of Sunrise Village, a grand fleet of the Naval Forces had prepared everything for their departure on such overcast days.

"Sea breeze, blow, blow! Those are the departing wings of the Wind God, seeking the faraway place where souls vanish..."

Raindrops, fall, fall! Those are the tears of the Feathered Serpent Divine's descent, causing even the earth to weep...

Sun, disappear! That is the reluctant gaze of the Sun God, watching the divine warriors, heading towards the cold battleground of death! ~"

On the shore of the village, thousands from the Totonac Tribe, young and old, gathered. They watched the brave fleet departing westwards for a last-ditch attack, their eyes filled with strong reluctance and

sorrow. Leading the Farewell Song for the warriors, the aged Hidden Snake Priests wept, singing with the most desolate and solemn voices!

"Mother of the Serpent, Mother Goddess of the Totonac! Please hear my mourning song and my sincere prayers... Our land, occupied by the evil Mexica, the descendants of the Sun and the Great Serpent, were tormented by the War God's cruel progeny... But today is the last moment, let us stand bravely one last time, against the forces of evil!"

On the flagship's longship, a tall Divine Platform was erected. As the leader and priest of the fleet, the Papu Priest, donned in a splendid feathered garment, held high the Divine Staff given by the Coastal Chief Priest, leading the prayer before setting out. At this moment, his face brimmed with the resolute determination and sorrow of facing death. His chants filled with dauntless fearlessness, prompting the samurai to lower their heads in reverence.

"The All Gods witness in the Divine Kingdom! The mortal combat lies ahead, and the blazing fire shall burn!...

Totonac warriors! We must carry the spirits of our ancestors and fight the mightiest enemies!...

We shall awaken the heroic spirits of the tribe, awaken the courage and strength of the past, seek along the coast...

We must locate that most wicked Wolf Banner, and towards the Mexica's God of Death, roar the bravest calls and unleash the final, most indomitable roar!"

Upon reaching this point, the Papu Priest raised his head, gritted his teeth fiercely, and with a powerful swing, wielded the Divine Staff towards the western coast!

"Charge! Charge! Charge!!... The fleet charges, ambushes the Mexica's Death God below! It is the Totonac Tribe's final hope!... For All Gods, ancestors, and the tribe, let us fight to the death, let the powerful Mexica also hear the cry of our spirits, know the strength of our defiance!"

Hearing such heroic calls, the Hidden Snake Priests and warrior leaders of the fleet could not help but shout in excitement. Soon, even the crowd on shore joined in, the sorrowful dirges transforming into spirited calls, echoing through the skies!

"Charge! Charge! Charge!!... Towards the Mexica's below, charge to death, fight to the end!"

Amidst the thundering shouts, Forest Wolf Mayakun, clad in a warrior's uniform with a trusted aide's wooden helmet, stood among the flagship's warriors, drawing no attention. At this moment, he stared wide-eyed at the courageously fearless Papu Priest leading the chants, transfixed. After a long pause, he finally could not help but mutter lowly.

"Damn it! That thick-skinned, shameless old fox!... If this guy gets to see His Highness, our status as surrendered generals might have to move back a spot..."

The sea wind howled, as the more than two thousand naval forces set out westward, taking with them twelve large ships, one or two hundred small boats, along with all the samurai, sailors, and shipwrights. As the ships moved westward, creating rippling waves, it was as if those waves fell right into everyone's hearts.

The elegy was bold and moving, the desperate departure. The entire Totonac Naval Forces adhered to the Papu Priest's command, relying on reliable intelligence to ambush the Mexica's Supreme Commander stationed by the Great Divine Mountain's seaside, His Highness, the Death God Xiulote. Yet, at this moment, as everyone shouted aloud, the thoughts turning in their hearts were entirely different!

"May All Gods and ancestors protect us! Bringing seven days' worth of food, launch a desperate attack! As long as we capture the Mexica's below, their grand army will retreat! This is the City-State and tribes' last opportunity, worthy of the honorable warriors laying down their lives for one last shot!"

The devoted Hidden Snake warriors and Tribal Warriors all harbored the determination of facing death, seeking the last chance. They held their heads high, their demeanor solemn as if making a sacrifice, with hope glimmering in their eyes. As for the warrior leaders at the bow of the ship, most prayed silently, their gazes somewhat flickering.

"Ancestor's protection! The Papu Priest has already said... Just one final ambush, and it would be worthy of the Hidden Serpent Holy City's Priesthood, worthy of the tribes and ancestors!... But if the tide turns

unfavorable, without hope of success... then disperse eastward, regroup near Red Lake Town, seek refuge with the coastal Maya city-state... During the escape, rowing an inconspicuous small boat increases the chance of survival!"

As for the key personnel on the large ships, the warriors and sailors from the Eastward Migration Tribes maintained a persistent silence. Though only vague whispers reached them, they already understood that this journey westward wasn't just a pure ambush... The leaders seemed to have other plans...

The grand fleet ventured westward in silence, passing en route the outer sea of the Hidden Serpent Holy City under the cover of night, making no attempt to draw near. From the ships, one could distantly observe, how the shadows outlined by the sprawling tents and the expansive fires vigilantly patrolled along the shore. From the distribution of these tents and fires, it was clear to see the thousands-strong Mexica legion had encircled Hidden Snake City from three sides, completely controlling the essential outposts and pathways at the city-state's perimeter.

"Dispatch two small boats under the cover of night, to inform the city's Priesthood! The Naval Forces are launching a desperate strike, ambushing the Mexica's below... Request their prayers in the Temple for us!... Also, reconnect with the Divine Descendant Nobility wishing to flee, those we've been in touch with..."

The Papu Priest narrowed his eyes, studying the besieged Hidden Serpent Holy City, discreetly laying a hidden move. Then, under the pretense of maintaining secrecy, he allowed the fleet to row through the night without pause.

The silent sea night quietly passed, while the fires along the shore never extinguished. The Mexica troops continually moved eastward. Meanwhile, this Totonac Naval Forces was the sole force progressing westward against the current!

Rain veiled and storm surged, with the entire fleet pressing on day and night. Over two days and nights, three hundred miles were traversed, making it from the water village of Sunrise Village to the eastern seaside of the Great Divine Mountain. On this journey, fortune seemed to favor them, encountering no adversarial vessels nor even a Mexica Scout was likely to spot them. When the fleet reached the foot of the Divine Mountain, they observed a towering Black Wolf Royal Banner proudly flying over the shore's water village!

"May All Gods and ancestors shield us! The Mexica's below resides here!"

"The ancestor's spirit shines! The Mexica below's escort is sparse! Comparable to our numbers!"

Upon witnessing the Royal Banner's rise, the fleet's Hidden Snake warriors broke into a burst of excited cheers. Before their departure, they had imagined many possibilities but never anticipated that everything would proceed so smoothly!

"Toot! Toot toot!"

Upon sighting the sea's fleet, an alarm horn immediately blared from the bluestone water village. Soon after, the water village's gates flung open, a procession of warriors streamed out, and on a small hill by the shore, they erected an unusually tall Royal Family banner.

Then, two thousand armored Imperial Guard Warriors, Armor Leaves clanking, stood silently, forming a disciplined battle line for combat. Donning a golden cloth-covered copper armor was a King, surrounded by many trusted aides, ascended the small hill, appearing beneath the Black Wolf Royal Banner. He gazed upon the fleet on the sea, then closed his left eye, retrieving a brass telescope from his bosom, placed it before his right eye, observed for a moment, then nodded in satisfaction.

"Indeed! Chief Divine's protection! Twelve large ships... He finally arrived as promised!..."

Chapter 1416: Divine Eye Telescope, Stirring and Impassioned...

"Your Highness, the copper tube you are holding, why is one end big and the other small, shining brightly..."

"Oh! Black Wolf, this is the latest masterpiece from the Divine Revelation Place, the 'Divine Eye Telescope'! It can magnify distant objects several times, as if they were right in front of you!"

On a small hill by the sea, Xiulote smiled and handed the one-meter-long copper tube to Black Wolf Torc.

"Here! Take a look!"

"Ah! Divine Eye Telescope? The new magic artifact from the Divine Revelation Place?"

Torc took a deep breath and cautiously took the long tube. He carefully stretched out his hand, touching the two convex crystal lenses, big on one end and small on the other, as if touching some mysterious object.

"Oh! Black Wolf, these transparent convex lenses were meticulously crafted by the jade craftsmen of the Divine Revelation Place using natural transparent crystals. The larger one is the 'objective lens', facing outside objects. The smaller one is the 'eyepiece', facing the eye..."

"The magnification is the focal length of the objective lens divided by the focal length of the eyepiece. The specific principles, including focal lengths of convex and concave lenses, light, and real vs. virtual images... I wrote a small book called 'Introduction to Divine Revelation Optics'. If you're interested, you can learn a thing or two..."

Xiulote explained for a while, looking at the confused eyes of Black Wolf and his suddenly trembling arms. He couldn't help but laugh and shake his head, patting his beloved general's shoulder.

"Haha! Never mind, you don't need to learn the specifics of optics... Hmm! Black Wolf, a telescope like this is very handy for marching and warfare. You just need to know how to use it... Yes, align one eye with the eyepiece, hold the telescope level, and look at the distant fleet, and you'll understand!..."

"Eh! Is the sea on top and the sky below?... Ah! Such a large ship, as if right in front of me!... Chief Divine! Is this brilliant rainbow a divine rainbow sent by the gods?... This! Chief Divine's blessing! Truly a miraculous magic artifact!!"

Black Wolf closed one eye, holding the long tube in both hands, moved slightly, and saw the inverted sea and sky, the suddenly magnified flagship of the naval forces, and the "false color bands" on both sides of his view.

"Indeed! This kind of Divine Eye Telescope is composed of two convex lenses, forming an inverted real image. It's easier to process the lenses, the field of view is broad, suitable for both maritime and land battle observations... As for the false color bands on the sides... it's actually the refraction and dispersion of light, which is chromatic aberration..."

Xiulote stroked his chin, recalling past optical knowledge, with a somewhat pensive expression. In fact, the simple "Keplerian telescope" he had craftsmen grind and assemble was based on middle school optics knowledge from his memory, using two differently sized convex lenses. According to his calculations, the magnification of this telescope should only be 4-5 times.

However, when this "ancient" telescope truly took shape, he realized the massive era gap in basic material science, profoundly affecting all aspects of manufacturing. He couldn't produce the standard prisms needed to be installed in the telescope to easily reflect the inverted real image upright. Neither could he produce achromatic lenses. Hence, the viewing image would inevitably blur at the edges, forming noticeable false color bands due to chromatic aberration.

"Chief Divine's blessings!... I've already had the craftsmen lengthen the tube, using less convex lenses to reduce the side blurring of the color bands as much as possible. But with the current craftsmanship... Ahem! Black Wolf, you should look through the middle for a clearer view!..."

"Good!... So big! Ah! Your Highness, I see them! So clear, so big! It's as if I could shoot through them with an arrow... Ahem!... With such a magic artifact, finding distant enemies and observing enemy formations will be much easier in the future!..."

Black Wolf Torc promptly fell silent, putting a stop to the unintentional murderous intent. With this "Divine Eye Magical Artifact", even at a distance of hundreds of meters, he could still clearly see the Papu Priest in a feather crown and ritual robe on the flagship. At this moment, the Papu Priest was raising the Divine Staff high, seemingly shouting something on the flagship.

"Blessings of all gods! Blessings of the ancestors! Attack! Attack! Landing attack!..."

"All Samurai and sailors, disembark! For all gods and ancestors, surge towards that small hill and seize that Royal Banner!..."

With the impassioned commands of the Papu Priest, the Totonac Naval Forces' morale was lifted, quickly approaching the shore. Over two thousand tribal warriors and sailors successively jumped from the large ships and small boats onto the shallow beach. Yet, the arranged Mexica Imperial Guard Warriors stood in solemn silence, without any reaction, merely allowing the enemy naval forces to land on shore, regroup, and reorganize.



"All disembark! Leave no one on the ships! This is the last chance for the Totonac tribes, must go all in, full force!..."

The Papu Priest shouted loudly, gathering over five hundred warriors and sailors loyal to him, along with dozens of important shipwrights, around him. Then, he looked at the more than a thousand fully landed warriors of Hidden Serpent City, and once again shouted loudly.

"Advance! Come with me! Towards that hill with the fluttering Royal Banner! The Mexica's Death God Temple is there..."

On the hill, Xiulote watched the Papu Priest's shouting and performance with great interest. He had already noticed that the more than two thousand Totonac naval forces before him were clearly divided into two parts. The main force, comprised of Hidden Serpent warriors, was filled with tragic murderous intent, resolutely advancing towards the hill. Meanwhile, the remaining tribal warriors and sailors stayed silent, quietly distancing themselves from the warriors.

"Interesting! Interesting! It seems this Papu can't control his Hidden Serpent warriors?... But even so, he still brought me both the people and the boats..."

Xiulote smiled, watching as the entire Totonac Naval Forces had landed. He then vigorously waved the red flag in his hand. Subsequently, two Tiger Squat Cannons suddenly fired into the sky, producing two thunderous cannon blasts.

"Boom! Boom!"

The cannon sounds carried the long-agreed signal to the distance. In the bay several miles to the northwest, three thousand East Sea Navy soldiers had been waiting for a long time. Naval Commander Nohuya held a spear, standing at the ship's bow. Upon hearing the cannon blasts, her face showed no joy, only calmly waved her spear forward.

"Chief Divine's blessings! All troops, attack! Receive the 'delivered' large ships!..."

"Chief Divine's blessings! All troops, attack!"

At the same moment, almost identical shouts erupted from the coastal naval fortifications. Then, another two thousand elite Imperial Guard Legions flowed out of the fortified naval citadel. They divided into two teams of a thousand, with clear targets, heading directly to cut off the rear of the landing naval forces!

"Advance! Come with me! For all gods and ancestors, charge towards the enemy's Royal Banner, there is only death in this battle!..."

Facing the newly emerged enemy, the Papu Priest raised the Divine Staff high, shouting passionately, and strode forward. With several hundred trusted aides, he dashed from the landing shore for a full quarter hour, reaching the small hill where the Royal Banner was, a mere hundred steps from the King! And behind him, a thousand Hidden Serpent warriors revealed their desperation, charging into the 4,000 Imperial Guards' encirclement with the heroic commander!

"Hmm?"

Watching the resolute assault of the slowly approaching two thousand naval forces, Xiulote frowned and silently retreated behind the Great Shield of Shield Guard Ters. Then, squinting his eyes, he focused on the charging Papu Priest, slowly raising one hand. Along with his motion, more than fifty skilled archers, trusted aides with Greatbows, all lifted their Greatbows, aiming at the Papu Priest a hundred steps away!

"Uh!..."

The Papu Priest keenly sensed the danger. He immediately halted his steps, surveyed the distance between the front and rear army formations, and felt it was about right, then ripped off his priestly Feather Crown, discarded the luxurious Feathered Serpent Ritual Robe, throwing it to the ground like some worthless garbage or burden.

Then, among the countless incredulous and shocked eyes of the 4,000 Imperial Guard Legion and over two thousand Hidden Serpent naval forces, he suddenly pulled out a flag from his bosom, vigorously unfurling it. As the sea breeze blew, the flag's emerald long feather and the figure holding a javelin and shield suddenly appeared, boldly declaring to everyone, this was indeed a Mexica Chief Divine's God flag!

"Chief Divine's blessings!..."

The Papu Priest passionately and loudly declared. He used all his strength to let his voice resonate in front of the hill. And the battlefield, along with his shout, instantly fell silent, like descending into a night of silence.

"Surrender! We... surrender!!..."

"Mighty and supreme Death God Temple! Your humble servant Papu wishes to bow beneath your divine flag, offering you all my loyalty and spirit!..."

"Supreme... as witnessed by the Chief Divine! We wish... to surrender to you!..."

#### Chapter 1417: Revenge and Conversion

Arrows shot fiercely, long spears pierced, and war clubs clashed. Four thousand Imperial Guard Warriors encircled them, and more than five hundred Tribal Warriors immediately switched allegiance. Most of the Totonac Naval Forces, overwhelmed by shock and despair, crumbled and surrendered! Those small bands of warriors that resisted stubbornly and fought to the death were like drops of blood in the sea, creating only a trace of bloodstain before vanishing without a trace.

"Papu! You betrayed All Gods and the Ancestors! Ah! You are destined to fall into the deep sea, your soul drawn into the Abyss!... Urgh! Huh!..."

The frenzied curses were abruptly cut off. The last resisting Hidden Snake Warrior, Nyuka, was simultaneously pierced by five long spears and then lifted high. The bleeding body, like a ragged red cloth, swayed weakly. Soon, after struggling for a few moments, the "red cloth" suddenly dropped its head, completely motionless. At this moment, the nearly two thousand Naval Forces captives kneeling on the battlefield, the more than two hundred fallen warrior corpses, and the remnants of Nyuka hoisted high seemed like a real omen, predicting the end of the Hidden Snake Tribes.

"Hmm... Just about done. The Tiger Fish have arrived and are taking over the ships along the shore... As for this guy..."

Xiulote's expression remained unchanged, looking at the Papu Priest kneeling barehanded several steps away. After pondering for a moment, he suddenly patted Black Wolf's shoulder and instructed.

"Black Wolf, go lift the Papu Priest, accept his surrender! In the presence of the Chief Divine! From today onward, your past grievances are wiped clean!..."

"Ah? Your Highness! You want me to accept his surrender?..."

"Yes! Go on! Accept his surrender before the legion... Black Wolf, if you have any grievances, now is the time to settle them! But after he surrenders, he will be one of ours, under your command..."

"Ah! This... Alright! I'll listen to you, Your Highness!..."

Hearing this, Black Wolf pursed his lips, gritted his teeth fiercely, then nodded in agreement. He strode over to the kneeling Papu Priest, eyeing him intensely, like a wolf ready to devour its prey.

"Uh!... Respected... Respected Black Wolf Leader..."

The Papu Priest raised his head, seeing Black Wolf approaching, and couldn't help but tremble all over. By now, he had surrendered all his chips, like a fish on the chopping block, left at the mercy of the other. And if the Mexica prince ignored reputation and let Black Wolf sacrifice him, there would be no escape...

"Chief Divine's blessing! That Black Wolf... Leader... Chief..."

"You! Stand up!"

Black Wolf Torc, with a cold expression, yanked the Papu Priest off the muddy ground. First, he slapped him fiercely several times, causing Papu's head to spin, blood to drip from the corner of his mouth, and even knocking out two teeth! Then, he grabbed Papu by the hair, pointed coldly toward the dead Hidden Snake Warrior Nyuka.

"Ha! You cunning creature! I gave you a few slaps to vent the anger for the Kingdom's Warriors who fell by your hand!... Now! Tell me! That guy with the Feather Crown and Armor, was he the most formidable Hidden Snake Warrior in your Naval Forces? Was it him who killed the exploration fleet's Tawalu?"

Upon hearing this question, the Papu Priest's heart tightened. He had led the naval forces to raid the exploration fleet, which was one of the biggest past grievances. And wasn't the Mexica armored Warrior Captain who died back then at Nyuka's hands?... Thinking of this, he endured the pain in the corner of his mouth, coughing up blood while sobbing and answering.

"Uh... Respected Black Wolf Leader... The Chief Divine can bear witness! It was indeed Nyuka who killed the Kingdom exploration fleet's Warrior Captain, and at the time, I tried to stop him... But as a warrior of Hidden Serpent City, he paid no heed to me at all!..."

"Bah! You cowardly fox! You did it, and killing was done, don't make so many excuses!... Back then, since we were enemies, we should have fought with all our might, dying in battle is worthy of the War God!..."

Black Wolf Torc squinted his eyes, fixedly staring at the Papu Priest for a while, then raised his hand and delivered several more slaps, making a whooshing sound. After this round of slaps, the Papu Priest saw stars, blood continuously seeped from the corner of his mouth, and his face swelled up like a monkey's red behind, leaving his speech incoherent.

"Chief... Divine... ah... plea...se... forgive..."

"Haha! Forgiveness? Papu, you cowardly fox, though clever and cunning, you can't fight at all!... Enough! If I slap you any more, you might die here... But His Highness has already instructed to spare your foxy life..."

Black Wolf Torc lifted the Papu Priest with one hand, coldly watched for a moment, then tossed him into the mud. He then unfastened an Obsidian Dagger used for sacrifices from his waist, throwing it to the trembling Papu Priest, and pointed once more toward the corpse of Hidden Snake Warrior Nyuka, giving heartless orders.

"Chief Divine witness! Papu, according to Mexica's sacrificial tradition, in front of the entire legion, go cut off that guy's head, and throw the fresh heart into the fire! Then, drink a mouthful of blood wine, cut your hair and burn it, swear allegiance to the Chief Divine!..."

"Sacrifice the Sacrifices, Blood Oath Allegiance!... Papu, once you pledge allegiance to the Chief Divine, all grudges between us, your blood feud with the Kingdom's Warriors, will be written off!... From now on, you live as the Chief Divine's Warrior, and die as the Chief Divine's Undead!..."

"Sacrifice the Sacrifices, Blood Oath Allegiance?... Chief Divine witness! Blood feud written off? Henceforth, allegiance to the Chief Divine..."

Hearing these words, the Papu Priest was greatly shaken. He turned his head towards the Death God Prince not far away. Xiulote, wearing a golden King's Helmet, gazed at the blood-streaked mouth of the Papu Priest, slowly nodding.

"Ah! Praise the Chief Divine! Praise Your Highness! And praise you, merciful Black Wolf General!..."

Seeing this scene, the Papu Priest was overtaken with joy. Although he had endured this round of slaps and humiliation, as long as he received such a promise in the presence of the Chief Divine and His Highness, to erase past grievances... the pervasive fear and anxiety ingrained in his heart instantly dissipated! From now on, no one could publicly exploit his past experiences to trouble him...

"Chief Divine's protection! Your loyal servant presents the divine Sacrifices for you!..."

The Sacred Fire blazed fiercely, priests began to chant songs, while warriors solemnly observed. The Papu Priest skillfully picked up the dagger, approached the deceased Hidden Snake Warrior Nyuka. Muttering softly as if consoling the departed spirit, he then, without hesitation, swung down the gleaming blade!...

"Sizzle!..."

The Sacred Fire roared, the fresh heart seared in the flames, hair consumed by the fierce fire. The bloody wine poured down his throat, making tears and snot gush from Papu. Yet he drank it in big gulps, wearing a peculiar smile, as if savoring some sweet, clear spring water.

"Praise the Chief Divine! He is supreme and great, governing all the world, omnipotent!..."

The conversion ceremony was completed quickly, and under the gaze of all, the Papu Priest earnestly called out, tears even falling from his eyes. The Chief God Priest overseeing the ceremony was about to carve the Chief Divine's Emblem on his forehead, when Xiulote's authoritative voice rang out from afar.

"Not yet!... Let him come pay homage!..."

"Have the accompanying priesthood conduct the conversion ceremony! Convert all captured prisoners, surrendering warriors and sailors, here!"

"Hmm, and those few hundred Tribal Warriors who surrendered with him... don't carve them yet!"

#### Chapter 1418: Trials and Questions

"You are Papu? In the Totonac Nava Language, 'Moon's Envoy'?"

"Yes, yes! Your Highness, I am Papu, the Moon's Envoy, also a servant of the Sun, and moreover, your servant! ... Ah, revered, supreme God of Death! Praise to you! You are the Sun God of the heavens, the great Serpent God of the seashore, and the Lord God of the jungle and earth!..."

The Black Wolf's Royal Banner fluttered atop the small hill. Xiulote, clad in golden armor, stood proudly amidst his numerous trusted aides. Two steps before him, Papu lay prostrate on the ground, hands bare with respect. Though blood stained his lips, he adeptly chanted praises. Each line of praise flowed out like poetry, even in standard Mexica Language!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Huitzilopochtli, exalted and immortal, reigning over all seas and skies! ... Praise the God of Death! Xiulotel revolves like the Night Star, moving from death to rebirth!"

"Haha! Papu, your Mexica Language is quite fluent! No wonder you are the only surviving high Feathered Serpent Priest from the Feathered Serpent Ancient City, having escaped thousands of miles! ... Hmm, as per the Feathered Serpent Ancient City's tradition, your grandfather or father should have been a high Feathered Serpent Priest and received the consecration of the Predecessor Monarch Montezuma I?..."

"Ah? Uh! This... I..."

Papu bowed his head, his thoughts swiftly racing, sweat seeping from his forehead. After brief contemplation, he kowtowed twice loudly, responding while prostrate.

"No, no, no! Supreme Highness! Upon hearing the divine revelation and encountering you, at that moment, I, a priest of the Fake God, was already dead!... And now, I am merely a warrior of the Chief Divine, your follower, prepared to fight to the death for the Chief Divine and the kingdom!"...

"Hahaha! Papu, you are indeed shrewd! No surprise, Tikalo calls you the Old Fox..."

"Uh! Fox? That's... Your Highness, I... I am your Spirit Fox! Sniffing out the divine grass and vine of the East for you, nourishing the great Mexica Divine Tree!"...

"Oh? Spirit Fox? Divine Tree?... Haha! Interesting, truly interesting!"...

The sun rose to the zenith, piles of Sacred Fire ignited. Chief God Priests raised daggers, chanting hymns. The stringent conversion Blood Oath took place on the tidal flats by the sea!

"Praise the Chief Divine!... The divine has arrived!"...

The army marched unyieldingly, converting countless tribes. The accompanying Chief God Priests and Temple Guards were already well-versed in the conversion rituals. Quickly, teams of captured Totonac Warriors, warriors, and sailors were transported before the Sacred Fire, pressed kneeling forcibly by the guards, their hair directly cut off. Then, amidst the high-pitched chant of the priests, the captives drowsily drank Blood Wine, vowing their souls to the Sun, and inscribed the emblem of the Chief Divine on their foreheads with a Stone Knife!

As for those unwilling to convert, the priests of the Chief Divine never forced them, merely pointing to either side. Thereafter, the Temple Guards coldly wielded sacrificial daggers, sending the devout yet stubborn souls away...



"Papu, you are fortunate to surrender directly to me!... While these Hidden Snake City's warriors will go through four phases of life and death screening to have a chance to assimilate into the kingdom's upper echelons."

Xiulote gently smiled, gesturing towards the distant conversion and sacrifice scenes, calmly narrating.

"The first life and death phase is battlefield slaughter and post-war sacrifice. Generally speaking, we dislike captives possessing too much influence. Hence, high-status Squad Officers, nobility, and Divine Descendants are directly chosen for execution!... Papu, now do you know why we do this?"

"Uh..."

At the sudden inquiry from His Highness, sweat again appeared on Papu's back. He suddenly realized that the God of Death's test for him had silently begun. His answer, satisfying or not to the esteemed highness, would clearly determine his ensuing fate!

"This... Your Highness... because you are the supreme Sun God, Serpent divine, Lord God... you are exceedingly grand, have eyes like fire, possess congenital divinity, unlike all the previous Seaside Chieftains!... You want to dominate the warriors of each tribe, control the power of all tribes, and naturally bypass these Chieftains, Chieftain leaders, and Squad Officers, directly absorbing the warriors into your fold..."

"Oh? Control power, control warriors?... Hmm, it can be understood like this too..."

Upon hearing, Xiulote pondered for a moment, nodding slightly. His expression remained serene, watching the curling smoke of the roaring Sacred Fire, observing those Hidden Snake's warriors with faces like ashes as he continued speaking.

"The second life and death phase is the test of faith, conversion through Blood Oath. After capturing the warriors from these tribes, the sacred conversion ritual is indispensable! And those refusing to swear the Blood Oath, to offer their souls to the Chief Divine, would perish in the ritual... Papu, why does the kingdom do this?"

"Uh!.. Your Highness, because the Chief Divine is supreme and mighty, the most powerful true god in the world!... The seaside tribes have been steeped in the muddy whispers of the Fake God since childhood, deluded by the priests of the Fake God... Therefore, only the Blood Oath and death can guide the redeemable followers onto the true illuminating path, letting the irrevocable wanderers perish here!"...

Papu watched Xiulote cautiously, observing his unchanged expression. He recalled carefully the "Book of Ama Colley," using his experience and knowledge as a senior priest, continuously trying to gauge His Highness's intentions.

"Praise the Chief Divine!... Only the faith in the Chief Divine, spread across every tribe in the Seaside Lands, embedded in the heart of every tribesperson... This jungle and coastline stretching for thousands of miles, countless separated and independent tribes, for the first time, have been connected and surrounded by the sacred giant serpent!..."

"Oh? Faith and tribes, connection and surrounding..."

Hearing these words, Xiulote's spirit was lifted. He looked deeply at Papu, refrained from any comment, and continued to speak.

"The third life and death trial is for the converted captives, incorporated into the vanguard's camp. They must transport supplies and provisions, suppress other tribes, endure repeated battles, and even participate in the most brutal sieges... Only then can they truly become warriors again, integrated into the kingdom's military system!..."

"And only the outstanding among them, who achieve remarkable military feats, can undergo the fourth life and death trial, joining the kingdom's formal corps! Thereafter, they receive land and slaves for their military merits, gaining noble status in the kingdom, enjoying the same position and treatment as Mexica Warriors!..."

"Papu, do you know what these two trials are?"

"Ah! Benevolent and generous Highness! These two trials are the vines of the Divine Tree, the road to the clouds, and the test for selecting your followers!..."

Papu's thoughts turned rapidly, igniting the wisdom and eloquence from the first half of his life. He raised his head, revealing a smile with two missing teeth, and answered passionately.

"The Chief Divine's blessing!... Only the warriors who have bled and sacrificed for the kingdom are worthy of being granted the power of the Divine Tree! And as they tread upon heaps of corpses, climbing arduously along this path, regardless of their origin or what they have gone through, they become the new nobility in the kingdom in the eyes of others... They will cherish this hard-earned power, becoming the vines and roots of the kingdom's Divine Tree rule!..."

"Your Highness, you are the Divine Tree that envelops the world, weaving a net with your broad leaves! And the eagles and tigers of the world will fall under your banner, to attack further afield!..."

"Haha!... The heroes of the world, all under my control? As long as they keep attacking, as long as the war continues?..."

Xiulote's eyes flashed, then he burst into laughter. He reached out, and in Papu's delighted gaze, he firmly grasped Papu's hair.

"Excellent! Truly a clever fox!..."

"Ah! Your Highness! I am willing to swear eternal loyalty, to fight for you in armor..."

"Papu, don't rush! The Hidden Serpent City won't hold for long. Your value is not solely in fighting... The entire Seaside Land, the vast majority of the Totonac Tribe, is about to fall under the kingdom's control! And the millions of Totonac Tribe members will, for the first time, be governed by one Great Chief..."

Xiulote's palm turned, rubbing Papu's head. Hmm, the hair is thick, feels very different from Tikalo's, like a fluffy old fox. For old foxes, it's always about the times and situations, adapting accordingly. As for vows of loyalty, naturally, they are meaningless. However, old foxes are very clever, and when used well, they're more effective than a pack of warriors who only know how to fight!

"Facing the first unification of the Seaside, I have one unresolved question, which requires you to answer... If you answer well, you'll have an opportunity to choose your future!... And if you don't answer

well, I won't punish you, but will send you to the wilderness to preach, to endure thirty years of sandstorms..."

"Ah? Answer a question?... What! Sent to preach in the wilderness, enduring thirty years of sand!..."

Hearing such a dreadful punishment, Papu trembled all over, his knees suddenly weakened. His heart pounded fiercely, as if sensing a difficult and ominous challenge.

"Your Highness! I... I beg you..."

"Precisely! Papu, you answered the previous three questions well, you surely understand my intentions... What I seek is not just the army's temporary conquest, but the long-term unification of people's hearts!..."

Xiulote smiled serenely, gently patting the old fox's head, issuing an indisputable royal decree.

"The Chief Divine witnesses! Papu, come! Use your Feathered Serpent Priest wisdom, think well for me!... Give me a brand-new proposal, tell me what to do to accelerate the integration of the Seaside tribes, to unify the hearts of their people!"

Chapter 1419: The Old Fox's Two Proposals: Holy City Ancestral Rite, Jungle Alliance

"With the Chief Divine's witness, Papu, you have given me two proposals!... One is to rebuild the Olmec Eastern Holy City and hold the Olmec ancestral rites? The other is to, in the name of the Olmec ancestors, summon the leaders of the inland jungle tribes to become the common lord of all tribes, uniting the hearts of all peoples?"

"Indeed! Your Highness is truly wise! In just a few sentences, you hit the nail on the head, surpassing everything Papu has said!..."

"Haha! Papu, your first proposal is indeed not bad! As the legitimate inheritor of the Olmec ancestors, the Alliance shares the same root and ancestors with the Totonac tribes and the Zoque tribes. And after

the destruction of the Feathered Serpent Ancient City and Hidden Serpent Holy City, the seaside Totonac tribes, the jungle Totonac tribes, the jungle Zoque tribes, and those loose and scattered small tribes... have completely lost their spiritual leader..."

The sunset cast a red glow, dyeing the blood-stained conversion ceremony, and also made the black Royal Banner shimmer with red light. Under the Royal Banner, Xiulote nodded with satisfaction and patted surrendered General Papu's shoulder. At this moment, his eyes were filled with vast ambition, and his mouth uttered a firm declaration.

"Therefore, the first proposal, to rebuild the Olmec Eastern Holy City and hold the ancestral rites, is to let the seaside Totonac tribes, the jungle Totonac tribes, the jungle Zoque tribes know!..."

"We Mexicas are not only the conquerors of the seaside but were once their Highland brothers! The Supreme Main God, the seaside Priesthood, is to be their new spiritual leader! And the rebuilt Olmec Eastern Holy City is the source of all tribes' ancestors, and also their true place of spiritual return!"

"Everything concerning faith, spirit, and ancestors must be told to them by the Kingdom, by me! Hence, I will personally host the grandest ceremony, to announce to all seaside and mountain forest tribes..."

"Yes! Yes! Your Highness, you truly have the wisdom of Divine Revelation! Announce the Divinity, honor the ancestors!... Praise the Chief Divine! I, Papu, like a blind fish, have survived in the marsh for thirty years, and today I finally see the true Divine Serpent! And thus I know, what it means to be born with the godly attribute of Divine Revelation, what it means to be destined to rule the mountains and seas!..."

"Haha! Papu, you really are interesting! Interesting!... Come on, well said, continue speaking!"

"Uh... Your Highness, actually, besides speeding up the integration of various tribes and uniting their hearts, establishing the Eastern Holy City and allying with the jungle tribes has more tangible benefits!... According to my foolish view, the army should conquer Hidden Serpent City and remove the spiritual leaders of the tribes as soon as possible. After conquering Hidden Serpent City, the attacks against the inland jungle tribes, especially the hundreds of thousands of Zoque tribes in the Southeast Jungle, cannot be rushed!..."

The red glow hung over the West Mountain, darkness emerged over the Eastern Sea. In front of all generals and His Highness, Papu was initially cautious and reluctant to speak. But under Xiulote's stern order, he had to rack his brains and gradually became more eloquent.

"If the kingdom's army goes deep into the jungle without waterway logistical support, in just two hundred miles, food will be exhausted. And the jungle's terrain is treacherous and difficult to navigate, making it hard to capture all tribes at once... Ahem! Honored Black Wolf Leader, I'm not talking about you... With your bravery, no tribe can resist you. However, they can escape and migrate in the jungle, or even seek refuge with the southern Zapotecs or the Southeast Highland Maya. You surely can't chase and kill them thousands of miles, sparing none... Uh! You can chase a thousand miles?... But as soon as your army returns, these tribes will migrate back, becoming a hidden threat once again... Uh! Ah!..."

"Black Wolf, in discussion, speak properly, don't hit people! Papu speaks realistically, although it involves planning and killing on your front line, and will modify your plans against various states, if it's right you should listen!... Come on, Papu, continue speaking!..."

"Cough! Cough!... Honored Death God, Honored Black Wolf General... Therefore, in my foolish opinion, instead of fighting each jungle tribe individually and forcing them to migrate and flee, it's better to establish an Olmec Eastern Holy City and hold ancestral rites... While the tribes are submissive and shocked, ally with the jungle tribes to become the common lord of all tribes!... And after Your Highness establishes nominal rule, you can summon the tribes together to march east and conquer the Maya!"

"Hmm... Ally with the jungle tribes, to become the common lord of all tribes... this line of thought..."

Regarding this second proposal, Xiulote's eyes flickered, actually a bit dismissive. What the surrendered General Papu stated was still about forming a City-State tribal alliance, becoming the Alliance Hierarchy, but expanding the scope to include the whole thousand miles of seaside and jungle.

After the Kingdom destroyed the two Totonac Holy Lands and directly controlled the coastal tribes, relying on powerful military might, they allied with the inland jungle tribes, establishing a suzerainty rule. And by establishing a new Holy Land, promising autonomy as a condition, they secured the nominal submission of many looser jungle tribes. Yet if Xiulote had enough time and strength, he would naturally still want to thoroughly conquer the inland thousand miles of jungle tribes and clear them out!

But thinking of the current reality, the army's eastern campaign against the seaside took a full three years to clear this thousand-mile coastline. To continue conquering the loose inland jungle tribes, some without even decent fortresses, who knows how many more years it would take! Yet the remaining time was already limited... Considering this, he slowly nodded.

"Hmm, with the Chief Divine's protection! The current situation requires urgent access to the Maya Lands... For the inland jungle tribes, we'll have to compromise a bit!..."

The sunset glow, the sky filled with red clouds, and the sea surface flickering with a blood-red light. The sacred conversion ceremony had long ended in the sunset, and it was soon mealtime. Xiulote stood up, gazed at the seaside's sunset, and then waved his hand, smiling as he instructed the furious Black Wolf.

"My Black Wolf, go, restrain the samurai in each camp, arrange for the newly converted captives! Tonight, I will drink with you here on this small hill and watch the sunset and moon at the foot of the Divine Mountain!..."

"Yes, Your Highness!"

Black Wolf stood up, nodded solemnly. Then he fiercely glanced at the "silver-tongued" and "strategically misguided" surrendered General Papu, then pressed his bronze longsword on his waist and strode away.

"Uh... Your Highness, you and your trusted generals drink together, should I leave first..."

"No need! Papu, you sit at the upper seat next to me."

Xiulote smiled, patting the seat beside him, causing sweat to appear instantly on Papu's forehead.

"Ah! I... sit at the upper seat beside you? This... this..."

"No problem! Come, sit down!... Papu, establishing the Olmec Eastern Holy City, holding ancestral rites, allying with the jungle tribes to become the common lord... these two proposals align with the Mexica epic, speaking of the common source myth of the world, and also aid in reshaping the shared identity of the Jiao People's descendants... really in line with my intentions!"

Xiulote reached out, pressing the trembling Papu beside him. Then, he turned solemn, looking Papu in the eye, seriously inquiring.



"But among these two proposals, the most critical point... Papu, where do you think the site for this Olmec Eastern Holy City would be best?!"

"Uh... Your Highness, please allow me to think carefully..."

"Good! No rush. Take your time thinking. If you give a good suggestion, I will personally pour you a drink!..."

"Ah! Ah, this... Your Highness, I can't accept, really can't accept!..."

Chapter 1420: Legacy of the Ancient Saint, Olmec Holy City

The night darkened gradually, and the moonlight was faint. Clusters of bonfires were lit along the coast. The aroma of roasted and cooked food spread between the mudflats and hills. The Royal Banner of the Black Wolf stood on a small hill, like a kind of solemn will, never moving an inch. At this moment, however, an additional bonfire was on the night hill, and a lot of grain fragrance wafted up in front of the fluttering flag.

Xiulote sat cross-legged in front of the fire, eating roasted soft corn tortillas and chatting with the nearby generals. After racking his brains, the Surrendered General Papu finally spoke up. He mumbled and beat around the bush for a while, then began to talk about the geography of the Seaside Lands.

"Your highest of highnesses! The thousand-mile Seaside and Jungle Lands can rely on four inland waterways, running from west to east, mainly the Earthen Great River of Golden Bay City, the White Hill Great River east of Coyote City, the Hidden Snake Great River of Hidden Serpent City, and the Sunrise Great River of Sunrise Village..."

"Among these, the Earthen Great River links four large city-states. Its specific course is the Golden Bay City River Mouth — Conical House City — Feather Bird City — Mud River City — upstream Mistec Plateau Valley. The lower reaches along this great river are firmly controlled by the Kingdom, counted as the heartland of the new Seaside Alliance!..."

"Next, the White Hill Great River winds and turns, connecting three large city-states through its downstream tributaries. The river mouth of White Sand Village — Ke Shi City — Coyote City — Rabbit Hill City — upstream Zapotek Valley. Its tributaries pass through the Third Ancient Olmec City, Zapotes. The Kingdom has also basically taken the lower reaches of this great river, and the jungle tribes upstream have mostly been intimidated by the Kingdom's might..."

"Further east, the Hidden Snake Great River connects two large city-states, even connecting to the boundless Great Lake between north and south! Hidden Serpent City River Mouth — the ruins of the First Ancient Olmec City — Grass Altar City — upstream jungle tribes — further upstream Zapotek Coast tribes. The middle and lower reaches of this great river, Grass Altar City, have been captured by the Kingdom, and the sacred site of sacrifice at the First Ancient City ruins is also under the Kingdom's control!..."

"More to the east, the Sunrise Great River, along with the Red River of Red Lake Town, connects the upstream river systems and the mountain forest Zoque tribes. The river's route is the mouth of Sunrise River/Red Lake Town — the ruins of the Second Ancient Olmec City La Venta/Sky City ruins — Peaceful Water City — Source Water City..."

"As for the Fourth Ancient Olmec City, Hill City, it is connected to Lake Sacrifice City by waterway. These two city-states on the western side of the Great Divine Mountain are not connected to any large water systems, relatively isolated, and both are under the Kingdom's control..."

The Surrendered General Papu extended his finger and drew the approximate flow of the four water systems in the mud in front of the bonfire, marking the positions of the four Olmec Ancient Cities. As a High Priest, he indeed inherited the oldest priestly knowledge. The most valuable of this knowledge was

the information on mountains, hydrology, and geography, which was most valuable for military expeditions.

"Respected highness! The Kingdom wishes to rebuild the Olmec Holy City; it ought to choose one of the four Olmec city-site ruins for reconstruction. In the eyes of the Seaside tribes, jungle tribes, and even the Maya tribes, the most undisputed, ancient, sacred Ancestral Holy City must naturally be the oldest and original ancient city, the first powerful Jiao people city-state... that is the First Ancient Olmec City, 160 li southwest of Hidden Snake City, 40 li north of Grass Altar City!..."

Speaking of this ancient sacred city-state ruin, the Surrendered General Papu couldn't help but be filled with passion. He expressed his excitement and recited the long-inherited sacrificial poetry, praising from the heart.

"Ah! Praise the Ancient Divines, who are the dawn of the First Era! Thousands of years ago, the All Gods emerged from the Jungle and stopped there for the first time!... On the fertile soil by the riverside, the Divines illuminated the Sun, and bestowed the Divinity of the sky and starry river to the Ancient Saints, establishing the first sacred ancient city... And those dozens of tall Divine stone sculptures are the faces of the Divines and Ancient Saints, converging and transmitting the Divine legacy of thousands of years to this day..."

"Thousands of years ago?"

Hearing such expression, Xiulote raised his eyebrows and asked with a bit of surprise.

"Papu, do you know how long this First Ancient Olmec City has specifically been inherited?"

"Uh... Your Highness, let me calculate. This ancient city also has the long calendar stone tablets, a series of the oldest calendar numbers. In fact, the ancestors of the Maya people also originate from the First Ancient City. And their long calendar stone tablets are the testament of this legacy..."

The Surrendered General Papu lowered his head, drawing dots and lines in the mud, calculating the 20-base long Era calendar. This chronological calculation is not easy, and it has gradually begun to be lost amid the warfare among various Maya factions, Seaside tribes, and jungle tribes. After a while, the Surrendered General Papu finally reached a definitive answer. In front of the generals and Samurai, he suddenly beamed with confidence and shouted loudly.

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! Divine favors His Highness! The establishment of this First Ancient City, up till now, has passed through 7 Baktuns and 4 Ka'tuns and 12 Tuns!... Among these, 7, 4, 12 are auspicious numbers, while 7, 5, 0 is of Great Prosperity! From Auspicious to Great Prosperity, it's in these eight years... which means, this is the blessing of the Chief Divine! Within eight years, the most ancient First Ancient Olmec City will be revived in His Highness's hands!..."

"Hmm? An eight-year term, from Ji to Great Prosperity?..."

Observing Papu's familiar actions, Xiulote's eyes flickered briefly, remaining noncommittal. He silently calculated, a Baktun being 400 years, a Ka'tun Year 20 years, and a Tun Year 1 year. 7 Bak'tuns, 4 Ka'tun Years, and 12 Tun Years together add up to 2892 years ago, and now it's 1491... Which means, according to Papu's priestly heritage, this ancient First Ancient City was initially established in 1402 BC, precisely during the early Shang Dynasty of Huaxia, a truly ancient city!

In fact, the current site of the First Ancient City, in later generations, is referred to as the San Lorenzo-Tenochtitlan site. It indeed was established in the 14th century BC, during the period of the Shang dynasty in Huaxia. This is an extremely large site, similar to the Great City or Yin ruins, a political, economic, and religious cultural center of the ancient Olmec Era, and the oldest large City-State unearthed in later Central America!

Therefore, the establishment of this First Ancient City marks the true rise of the Olmec civilization, also the first spark of civilization among the various tribes in Central America! It predates the jungle-based Maya civilization and the highland Teotihuacan civilization by over a thousand years, undoubtedly the cultural ancestor of all tribes in Central America!

As for this so-called Great Prosperity, eight years later in the 7 Baktuns 5 Ka'tun Years, it would be exactly 2900 years... Of course, for the priests of various tribes, whether it is auspicious or inauspicious often depends on the diviner or the one conducting the sacrificial rite...

"May the Chief Divine witness! The First Ancient City of the Olmec Era, established nearly three thousand years ago, is indeed the most suitable Olmec Holy City!"

After detailed contemplation, Xiulote finally made the decisive decision, selecting this most ancient First Ancient City as the rebuilt Olmec Holy City, as the sacred ancestral land shared by all tribes, to unite the hearts of all tribes!

"May the Chief Divine bless! After being dormant for nearly three thousand years, the Olmec First Ancient City is destined to flourish again under the Kingdom's rule as the 'Holy City Ancestral Land'!"

Under the bright moon and starry river, Xiulote stood up, raised the Divine Staff in his hands, and loudly announced to the gathered generals. In witness of the Divine Mountain, the generals also lowered their heads and responded in unison.

"Praise the Chief Divine! May the Divine bless the Holy City Ancestral Land! May the Divine bless the Alliance, Kingdom, and Your Highness!..."

At this moment, the ancestral land of the world, the origins of the tribes, was designated by the king on the hill under the foot of the Divine Mountain. Xiulote's eyes gleamed brightly, seemingly shining with divine splendor. He then looked towards the surrendered general Papu, who lowered his head with hesitation, not daring to look directly, and solemnly asked.

"Papu, in the myths of the Seaside Lands, what is the name of this First Ancient City?"

"Uh... Your Supreme Highness! This ancient city is the dwelling place of the All Gods and the foundational site of all saints. In the ancient heritage tablets, it bears only two specific pictorial symbols, one being 'the Original Ancient City', and the other 'the Ancestor's Holy City'! Also, in the sacrificial hymns of various tribes, it is extensively praised for its 'ancient' and 'sacredness'... As for the specific name used by the Olmec people thousands of years ago, it cannot be depicted on the heritage tablets, nor recorded in ancient sacrificial poems, and is known to none..."

"Oh? 'The Original Ancient City'? 'The Ancestor's Holy City'? 'Ancient' and 'sacred'?!..."

Hearing this, Xiulote lowered his gaze, naturally coming up with a name. Inexplicably, he felt a sense of ancient destiny, a grand pursuit! Of course, so-called destiny and pursuit do have a traceable source. After all, all future imagination stands on the mysterious ancient ruins, stemming from these 'lost' civilizations...

After a brief reminiscence, Xiulote smiled faintly, his eyes deep and timeworn. He glanced around at the people, and under the witness of the bright moon, starry river, and Divine Mountain, he established the name of the ancient city, also taking on a certain unknown destiny and causation shared by the people!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Good! Very good!... In that case, this First Ancient City to be rebuilt, this Olmec Era Holy City, shall be called the 'Ancient Holy City'!..."

