

Civilization 234

Chapter 234: Papermaking improvements, price of gold for bones and craftsman scholar_2

The craftsmen instantly cowered on the ground in terror, frightened and quick to speak in turn.

"Your Highness, yesterday afternoon, Xipak brought out a batch of very white paper, intending to present it to you. But you did not come later."

"After Lord Tezroca saw it, he went over and talked to him about something, then the two of them had an argument. Xipak threw down the white paper and ran off, and Tezroca took the batch of white paper away, saying he would study it..."

"Xipak? Where is he?!" Xiulote asked again.

The craftsmen hesitated for a moment. They glanced at the Samurai next to them, then at the person in charge who was collapsed on the ground, and one pointed to the east while another quietly spoke.

"Xipak came early this morning, and then he was locked in the small hut on the east side by Lord Tezroca."

Xiulote waved his hand, and several Samurai went together, breaking into the small hut in the corner of the east. Soon, they dragged out a young craftsman, whose hands and feet were bound with rope and mouth stuffed with coarse paper. The craftsman had a lively gaze and his features were somewhat pleasant to look at.

The young man looked at the Head Warrior. Bertade nodded, pulled out a Bronze Axe, and with an accurate swing, chopped off the ropes binding the young craftsman's hands and feet, and also removed the coarse yellow paper from the craftsman's mouth.

Gaining his freedom of hands and feet, Xipak relaxed and then slumped. He sat on the ground to rest for a while, his gaze intently fixed on Tezroca, who was also collapsed on the ground. Then, the young craftsman stole a glance at the style and form of Xiulote's clothing and quickly knelt respectfully on the ground.

"Are you Xipak?" the prince asked, his voice cold and authoritative.

"Respected Your Highness, I am Xipak, a descendant of the Priest from Tenochtitlan."

The young craftsman answered earnestly.

A descendant of the Priest, fallen to a craftsman... Xiulote pondered lightly and continued to inquire.

"Xipak, did you send the white paper to the carving place?"

At this point, Tezroca's eyes widened fiercely as he glared at Xipak, who was slightly trembling.

"Yes, Your Highness. Hearing that you would visit today, I came early in the morning and handed another batch of paper I had stored earlier to Uncle Aquila. He said this batch of white paper was of excellent quality and promised it would be shown to you."

Hearing this, Xiulote's gaze hardened. He recalled Aquila's ordinary appearance and those calm, steady eyes.

"How was the batch of white paper made?" Xiulote asked, focusing on the most crucial point.

"Steamed with vapor produced by burning the Stone of the Dead. It whitened after a while." Xipak did not hesitate and revealed the biggest secret. At this moment, being held down on the ground, Tezroca finally heard the result he had been pressured to reveal the day before, turning pale with dread.

With his eyes closed and deep in thought, the young man understood: sulfur burning to form sulfur dioxide. Sulfur dioxide is used for bleaching, combining with colored substances to form unstable colorless compounds. It all made sense!

Realizing this, Xiulote nodded. Then, he looked at Xipak again.

"What happened between you and Tezroca yesterday and today?"

Xipak clenched his teeth. He clenched his fists and angrily raised his voice in reply.

"Your Highness, you promised a substantial reward for improvements in paper. Everyone was holding their breath, working hard on research. I was the first to figure out the method to add cactus juice to the pulp, which Tezroca took away. Then I found the method to bleach the paper, and this time I hid it. Yesterday I brought out the white paper, planning to report it to you face-to-face during your inspection."

"As a result, Tezroca set his sights on it again. After you left yesterday, he pressed me again. This time, I only said it was a coincidence, then I threw down the paper and quickly ran away."

"This morning, I hid my presence and entered the Divine Revelation Place through a side door, handing another batch of white paper to Uncle Aquila. Then as soon as I arrived at the paper production area, I was caught by Tezroca, who was prepared and had several craftsmen with him. He locked me up in a hut until you released me... Tezroca wanted to claim the reward you promised all for himself!"

Hearing this, fear increasingly gripped Tezroca's heart. He struggled fiercely on the ground, crying out loudly.

"Your Highness, it's not like that! I shared all these methods with the craftsmen in the end. I did not impede the great undertaking of the Alliance, nor did I affect paper production! As the person in charge, I also made contributions to these improvements; I just deserve a larger reward..."

All the clues were now clear, the remaining details irrelevant.

Xiulote closed his eyes, a surge of fierce anger burning inside: the research system he had had high hopes for, barely established, was already being infiltrated by the bureaucratic style of the nobility, resulting in the exploitation of the developers, unwillingness to share the results of their research, and hindrance to technological progress! This was an unforgivable sin!

A moment later, when Xiulote reopened his eyes, they were filled with murderous intent.

"Bertade!"

The Head Warrior bowed, waiting for orders, his expression calm.

"Tezroca has undermined Divine Revelation, a crime that cannot be forgiven. Behead him immediately!"

Xiulote spoke authoritatively, brooking no defiance.

Bertade did not hesitate, pulling out the Bronze Axe from his waist. He took two steps forward and approached Tezroca.

Seeing the approaching Bronze Axe of the Samurai, Tezroca cried out in despair and fear, his voice cracking.

"Your Highness, Your Highness! I am a descendant of the hereditary nobility! I am willing to resign and leave! Spare me..." His words abruptly stopped.

The Head Warrior stretched out his robust left hand, forcefully grasping Tezroca's throat, like holding a turkey. Then, he slightly scanned the neck of the person in charge, finding the best soft landing spot.

After, he shifted his body to the side, avoiding the gushing blood. Finally, he steadied his right hand holding the Bronze Axe and forcefully brought it down, cutting into the soil.